

The Anthropology of Morality in Melanesia and Beyond

Edited by
John Barker

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF MORALITY IN
MELANESIA AND BEYOND

Anthropology and Cultural History in Asia and the Indo-Pacific

Series Editors:

Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern
University of Pittsburgh, USA

This series offers a fresh perspective on Asian and Indo-Pacific Anthropology. Acknowledging the increasing impact of transnational flows of ideas and practices across borders, the series widens the established geographical remit of Asian studies to consider the entire Indo-Pacific region. In addition to focussed ethnographic studies, the series incorporates thematic work on issues of cross-regional impact, including globalization, the spread of terrorism, and alternative medical practices.

The series further aims to be innovative in its disciplinary breadth, linking anthropological theory with studies in cultural history and religious studies, thus reflecting the current creative interactions between anthropology and historical scholarship that are enriching the study of Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. While the series covers classic themes within the anthropology of the region such as ritual, political and economic issues will also be tackled. Studies of adaptation, change and conflict in small-scale situations enmeshed in wider currents of change will have a significant place in this range of foci.

We publish scholarly texts, both single-authored and collaborative as well as collections of thematically organized essays. The series aims to reach a core audience of anthropologists and Asian Studies specialists, but also to be accessible to a broader multidisciplinary readership.

Recent titles in the series

Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia

Edited by

Ildikó Bellér-Hann, M. Cristina Cesàro, Rachel Harris and Joanne Smith Finley
ISBN 978 0 7546 7041 4

Gender, Christianity and Change in Vanuatu: An Analysis of Social Movements in North Ambrym

Annelin Eriksen
ISBN 978 0 7546 7209 8

Family, Gender and Kinship in Australia The Social and Cultural Logic of Practice and Subjectivity

Allon J. Uhlmann
ISBN 978 0 7546 4645 7

The Anthropology of Morality in Melanesia and Beyond

Edited by
JOHN BARKER
University of British Columbia, Canada

ASHGATE

© John Barker 2007

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

John Barker has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the editor of this work.

Published by

Ashgate Publishing Limited
Gower House
Croft Road
Aldershot
Hampshire GU11 3HR
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
Suite 420
101 Cherry Street
Burlington, VT 05401-4405
USA

Ashgate website: http://www.ashgate.com
--

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

The anthropology of morality in Melanesia and beyond. -

(Anthropology and cultural history in Asia and the Indo-Pacific)

1. Social values - Melanesia 2. Social ethics - Melanesia
3. Ethnology - Melanesia 4. Melanesia - Social life and customs

I. Barker, John, 1953-
303.3'72'0995

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The anthropology of morality in Melanesia and beyond / [edited] by John Barker.

p. cm. -- (Anthropology and cultural history in Asia and the Indo-Pacific)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-7546-7185-5 (alk. paper)

1. Ethnology--Melanesia. 2. Ethics--Melanesia. 3. Anthropological ethics. 4. Melanesia--Social life and customs. I. Barker, John, 1953-

GN668.A57 2007

305.800995--dc22

2007025293

ISBN 978 0 7546 7185 5

Printed and bound in Great Britain by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall.

Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Series Editors' Preface, Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart</i>	<i>xiii</i>
1 Introduction: The Anthropological Study of Morality in Melanesia <i>John Barker</i>	1
PART I: MORAL EXEMPLARS IN VILLAGE SOCIETY	
2 Morality, Politics and the Melanesian Big Man: On <i>The Melanesian Manager</i> and the Transformation of Political Anthropology <i>Joel Robbins</i>	25
3 When is it Moral to be a Sorcerer? <i>Doug Dalton</i>	39
PART II: THE MORALITY OF MODERNITY	
4 Moral Exchange and Exchanging Morals: Alternative Paths of Cultural Change in Papua New Guinea <i>Bruce M. Knauft</i>	59
5 All Sides Now: The Postcolonial Triangle in Uiaku <i>John Barker</i>	75
6 Reconfiguring Amity at Ramu Sugar Limited <i>Frederick Errington and Deborah Gewertz</i>	93
PART III: NEW MEN AND NEW WOMEN	
7 Changing Minds: Hysteria and the History of Spirit Mediumship in Telefolmin <i>Dan Jorgensen</i>	113
8 Morals and Missionary Positionality: Diyos of Duranmin <i>Roger Ivar Lohmann</i>	131

vi	<i>The Anthropology of Morality in Melanesia and Beyond</i>	
9	“In the Way” in Melanesia: Modernity and the New Woman in Papua New Guinea as Catholic Missionary Sister <i>Nancy C. Lutkehaus</i>	149
PART IV: BEYOND MELANESIA		
10	<i>Homo Anthropologicus</i> in Aboriginal Australia: “Secular Missionaries,” Christians and Morality in the Field <i>Robert Tonkinson</i>	171
11	Reaching for the Absolute <i>F. G. Bailey</i>	191
	Epilogue <i>Kenelm Burridge</i>	209
	<i>Bibliography</i>	211
	<i>Index</i>	229

For Ken Burridge: Scholar, Mentor, Exemplar

This page intentionally left blank

List of Contributors

F. G. Bailey is Professor Emeritus in Anthropology at the University of California San Diego. A major figure in the study of culture and politics, he is the author of the classic, *Stratagems and Spoils* (1969) and numerous other significant books and articles. His most recent book is *The Saving Lie: Truth and Method in the Social Sciences* (2003).

John Barker is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. He has published extensively on missionaries and Christianity in Oceania and First Nations communities in British Columbia. He is editor of *Christianity in Oceania* (1990) and, with Douglas Cole, of *At Home with the Bella Coola Indians* (2003), as well as author of *Ancestral Lines: The Maisin of Papua New Guinea and the Fate of the Rainforest*.

Kenelm Burridge is Professor Emeritus in Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of numerous widely-read books on Melanesian society, millenarianism, missionaries and individuality. His books include *Mambu* (1960), *New Heaven, New Earth* (1969), *Tangu Traditions* (1969), *Encountering Aborigines* (1973), *Someone No One* (1979) and *In the Way* (1991).

Doug Dalton is a Professor of Anthropology at Longwood University. He is the editor of a special issue of *Oceania* on "A Critical Retrospective on 'Cargo cult': Western/Melanesian Intersections" as well as numerous articles on the Rawa people of Papua New Guinea and anthropological perspectives on millenarianism.

Frederick Errington is Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at Trinity College and **Deborah Gewertz** is G. Henry Whitcomb Professor of Anthropology at Amherst College. Singly and together they have authored a series of innovative and widely-read works concerning the confrontations of Melanesian people with variation forms of modernity. Their jointly authored books include *Cultural Alternatives and a Feminist Anthropology* (1987), *Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts* (1991), *Articulating the "Last Unknown"* (1995), *Emerging Class in Papua New Guinea* (1999), and, most recently, *Yali's Question: Sugar, Culture, and History* (2004).

Dan Jorgensen is an Associate Professor and Department Chair of Anthropology at the University of Western Ontario. He is the author of numerous articles on the Mountain OK people of Papua New Guinea analyzing their indigenous religion and society as well as the impact of Christianity, mining, and involvement in national politics.

Bruce M. Knauft is Samuel C. Dobbs Professor of Anthropology and Executive Director, Institute for Comparative and International Studies, at Emory University. He is the author of six books and many articles on Melanesian ethnography and anthropological theory including *Good Company and Violence* (1985); *South Coast New Guinea Cultures* (1993); *Genealogies for the Present in Cultural Anthropology* (1996); *Primitive to Post-colonial in Melanesia and Anthropology* (1999); *Exchanging the Past: A Rainforest World of Before and After* (2002); *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World* (2005); and editor of *Critically Modern: Alterities, Alternatives, Anthropologies* (2003).

Roger Ivar Lohmann is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Trent University and editor-in-chief of *Reviews in Anthropology*. He is the editor of *Dream Travelers: Sleep Experiences and Culture in the Western Pacific* (2003) and has authored numerous articles concerning dreams and religious conversion in Papua New Guinea.

Nancy C. Lutkehaus is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies at the University of Southern California. She is the author of *Zaria's Fire: Engendered Moments in Manam Ethnography* (1995), which received the 1996 Choice award as Outstanding Academic Publication, along with many edited books and articles on the gender, leadership and missionary activities in Papua New Guinea. Her most recent book, co-edited with Mary Huber, is *Gendered Missions: Men and Women in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (1999).

Joel Robbins is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, San Diego. His articles on the Urapmin and the anthropology of Christianity have appeared in such anthropological journals as *American Anthropologist* and *Current Anthropology*. He is the co-editor with David Akin of *Money and Modernity: State and Local Currencies in Melanesia* (1999), and with Holly Wardlow of *The Making of Global and Local Modernities in Melanesia: Humiliation, Transformation and the Nature of Cultural Change* (2005). He is also the editor of a special issue of *Religion* on "The Anthropology of Christianity," and the author of *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society* (2004).

Robert Tonkinson is Professor Emeritus in Anthropology at the University of Western Australia. He is the editor of *Anthropological Forum* and the one of the most respected students of Australian Aboriginal society. His many publications include the classic works, *The Jigalong Mob: Aboriginal Victors of the Desert Crusade* (1974) and *The Mardudjara Aborigines: Living the Dream in Australia's Desert* (1979).

Acknowledgements

Most of the chapters in this volume were first presented at a session discussing Kenelm Burridge's scholarly work at the 2003 meetings of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) held in Vancouver, Canada. It is a testament to Burridge's continuing influence that half of the participants had not previously met him. Cyril Belshaw and Jean-Marc Philibert were lively participants; unfortunately, circumstances did not allow the inclusion of their contributions. I am deeply grateful to Freddy Bailey for agreeing to read through an early draft and write a concluding chapter. Thanks as well to Ken Burridge for a (typically) pithy Epilogue. This volume would not have come about without the encouragement of Rena Lederman, Jeanette Mageo, and the members of the ASAO Editorial Board whose invaluable suggestions shaped the volume as it began the long transition from conference papers to a coherent book. I reserve my deepest gratitude and appreciation for Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern who generously stepped to support the project at a critical moment and whose many cogent suggestions greatly improved the manuscript. Finally, thanks to the two anonymous Ashgate reviewers for your careful reading and supportive critiques proved very helpful in pulling the final version together.

This page intentionally left blank

Series Editors' Preface

Morality and Cosmology: What do Exemplars Exemplify?

Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart¹

We are delighted to be able to include John Barker's edited volume on morality in "Melanesia" (the conventional term used to refer to the South-West Pacific area) in our Ashgate Series. John Barker has been a pioneer and distinguished long-term proponent of studies on the impact of Christianity in this region of the world, as exemplified in his early edited volume *Christianity in Oceania* and his chapter in James Carrier's edited volume *History and Tradition in Melanesian Anthropology* (Barker 1990, 1992; Carrier 1992). This engagement with the effects of Christianity, shared with the work of Kenelm Burridge, fits also with a focus on issues of morality, since these issues have been made more explicit and conscious in people's lives with the historical advent of moralistic preaching by Christian missionaries and evangelists. It is appropriate, therefore, that these concerns should have been brought together in a general set of studies on the anthropology of morality, encompassing Christianity but also many other topical themes, including sorcery, witchcraft, leadership, and conflict resolution, all seen in the context of cultural permutations and historical changes. (These are important themes to which we have also contributed in our writings, see for example, Stewart and Strathern 2004; Strathern and Stewart 2000a, 2000b, 2004).

In this Preface we want to pick out a number of points that center in general on the relationship between morality and cosmology. Barker recognizes the important connections between these descriptive domains in his Introduction to the volume. We supply here some materials from the Highlands region of Papua New Guinea, since the chapters included here do not primarily deal with cases intrinsic to that region.² Our overall point is that, ultimately, in these Highlands societies morality and cosmology, in the broad sense, were inextricably interlinked. By morality here we mean not only rules for behavior, but anticipations of the consequences

1 Prof. Andrew Strathern and Dr. Pamela J. Stewart are a husband and wife research team who have for many years conducted research work around the globe, including the Pacific, Asia, Europe, and Australia, and published their findings in scholarly books and articles (see www.pitt.edu/~strather/sandspublicat.htm). They have a broad range of interests within anthropology, cultural history, and ritual and religious studies. They are also the Co-Editors of the *Journal of Ritual Studies*.

2 Papua New Guinea has been a place that Strathern and Stewart have worked in for many, many years. They continue their research and their collaborations there.

of keeping to, or breaking, these rules. (Rules, of course, may also themselves be unclear, flexible, changing, or contingent.) By cosmology we mean the ideas about the basic frameworks of power, intentionality, and responsibility that influence human lives and emanate from the world of spirits, ancestors, ghosts, deities, and the like. While we can separate morality from cosmology in analytical terms, and we can also say that for the most part morality is explicit while cosmology is implicit, it is in the ritual context that the two domains are most often brought together. Hence a nexus develops between morality, cosmology and ritual.³

These remarks are relevant to the long-standing discussions of the character of leadership and the means of achieving prominence in local communities. Two stereotypes have grown up in relation to this topic. One is that an earlier generation of writers stressed the individualistic, entrepreneurial, and self-seeking aspects of the activities of big-men in the Highlands. This tendency was, it was suggested by some writers, contrasted with the behavior of hereditary chiefs or of non-entrepreneurial great-men (e.g. Godelier 1982). Marshall Sahlins' early article (Sahlins 1963) is often cited as the source of this contrast. The second overarching stereotype that has grown up reverses this narrative. Here we are told that, on the contrary, these Highlands societies, like others in Melanesia, were marked by a quite different social ideology, in which persons themselves embodied interpersonal codes of sociality which would largely exclude individualistic behavior. Individualism thus came largely to be seen, in this stereotype, as a product of colonial and post-colonial change; mostly the result of the introduction of Christianity and capitalism, twin forces of "modernity". (For a discussion on these themes see LiPuma 2001 and LiPuma and Lee n.d.).

Both of these stereotypes are misleading, because each of them suppresses one pole of a complex dialectic of social relationships; and each fails to take into account ethnographic data that run counter to their presuppositions. Highlands Papua New Guinea societies were, to begin with, not homogeneous, but showed a complex range of variations (see e.g., Feil 1987). In the contemporary context, also, they show different trajectories of change (e.g. Strathern and Stewart on the Duna people 2004 and Stewart and Strathern 2002a). In earlier times, as now, they displayed an *interplay* between individualistic and collective or group-oriented forms of behavior. And this interplay existed, and exists, not only at the level of actual behavior, but also at the normative level, where people were expected to be both creative and also socially responsible in their conduct. Thus, Highlanders were neither simply "pre-adapted" to the introduced world of capitalist-style economic enterprise; nor, on the other hand, were they so collectively oriented that they were unable to "adapt" to changing circumstances and the opportunities which these afforded.

In our writings on this topic we have developed the concept of the "relational-individual" precisely in order to capture the logic of this situation. We have offered

3 Stewart and Strathern are currently editing a set of papers from a workshop on religious conversion that they organized and held in Taiwan in 2005 (at the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, while they were working there as Visiting Research Scholars) with comparative ethnographic materials from Taiwan and the South-West Pacific (see, P. J. Stewart and A. Strathern, (eds), *Religious and Ritual Change: Cosmologies and Histories*, forthcoming)

this concept as a practical and operational way of recognizing the duality of social action in the Hagen area (and elsewhere), and also as a way of adequately representing the Hageners' own concept of the *noman*, or socially informed mind (see below). The concept gives balanced weight to both relational and individual aspects of action, and empirically allows us to adjudicate between these aspects in any given sequence of actions or in a person's life trajectory (Stewart and Strathern 2000a; Strathern and Stewart 1998).

These considerations are relevant to the question of morality. "Individualism" is often associated with the idea of flouting rules or exploiting others, exhibiting "autonomy" in a coercive way: in other words with behavior that runs counter to morality. But in the Highlands of New Guinea some forms of "individuality", by way of excellence in activities such as making speeches, motivating others, or fighting in battle, were, and are, considered highly praise-worthy or morally as well as technically excellent. If individual actions run against moral expectations, this is a different matter. But in general there is often leeway made for individual choices and preferences. (The early ethnographies by Berndt 1962 and Reay 1959 remarked on this point, which is at the heart of the debates on "flexibility" in Highlands social processes and norms.) Moral problems and their solutions, emerge when there is some conflict between normative expectations and actions.

In the context of discussion about "big-manship", no matter how much leaders are portrayed as pursuing their own interest, it remains the case that such interest could never be pursued regardless of moral and cosmological frameworks. We take here some materials from the Hagen area, on the well known concept of the *noman* or "mind" (see Stewart and Strathern 2001, with references to earlier writings on this concept, e.g. A. Strathern 1981). *Noman* is a concept that mediates between mind and body, encompassing both. It can be glossed as referring to either a highly individual mode of actions or a highly collective context. In all cases it implies the use of choice and intention. A particular *noman*, or "thought", may be followed in preference to others, and so the concept can also be glossed as referring to the exercise of a "will" to action. A *noman* that is aligned properly is said to lead to good actions and to be "straight" (*kwun*). One that leads to bad actions (and results) is said to be "athwart" or "crooked" (*peta ropa petem*). The important point to notice here is that the *noman* is linked both to the body and to the extra-corporeal world of the spirits. If a person's *noman* is good, their body will also be good, that is healthy and strong, not thin and weak. And this in turn is seen as a result of the favor of the spirits of dead kinsfolk. Above the level of such dead kin there is also the idea of the *mi* or collective instrument of group morality. The *mi* is a substance, usually a plant or leaf, on which people accused or suspected of some wrongdoing swear. If they tell the truth, it is said, they remain healthy. If they lie, the *mi* may make them seriously sick or kill them. To avert such a result, they should confess their wrongdoing and make amends for it by paying compensation. The *mi* is said to be able to see people's wrongdoings even if these are hidden from their relatives. The mythological framework behind all this is that the *mi* is a mark given to a group's ancestor endowing the group with the power to reproduce itself, to grow and flourish, as a plant does. The *mi*, in other words, is the basis for a whole cosmology, that ultimately supports morality but also ensures fertility. Morality, fertility, and cosmology all go together.

One of the contexts in which this nexus is most strikingly and regularly made evident is the context of sickness, which we have mentioned above. The Hageners' concept of *popokl* (anger, frustration) touches deeply on all aspects of social behavior and personal well-being among these people (see Strathern and Stewart 1999). Sickness is intimately linked to *popokl* and thus to morality and cosmology. A close parallel to this situation can be found in Verena Keck's study of sickness and healing among the Yupno of Teptep in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea (Keck 2005). Another context in which the linkage between morality, cosmology, and a particular customary domain is revealed, is the observance of taboos. Critically discussing the ideas of a whole range of theorists (e.g. Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, Freud, Lévi-Strauss, Leach, Douglas), Valerio Valeri has pointed out that among the Huauulu people of the Moluccas the linkages between taboos and morality are generally made after some misfortune is experienced (Valeri 2000: 72). This is also indeed how the linkages are generally made in Hagen. Typically, a person falls ill. Relatives ask if the person is *popokl* about something. The person may then reveal that someone else has done them wrong, as they see it. Remedial action must then be taken if the person is to recover their health. In the process, moral errors are revealed. Finally, here, another ultimate context in which moral values are held to reside is the context of place, or more specifically emplacement, the identification of persons with places. Michael Scott has recently examined this linkage in his extensive and probing analysis of matrilineality and polyontology among the Arosi people of Makira in the Solomon Islands (Scott 2007). The primordial (*auhenua* in the local language) connections between matrilineal affiliations and ancestral places which the Arosi maintain are comparable to the importance Hageners attribute to the concept of the *mi* as the repository both of the moral values and of the ultimate origins of each of their major named groups.

One of the most obviously individualistic leaders we have known in the Hagen area was Ongka-Kaepa of the Kawelka group (see Strathern and Stewart 2000a for Ongka's own account of his life and other relevant materials; also Strathern and Stewart 2007a). Ongka excelled as an orator and in persuading others to help raise wealth items needed for *moka* occasions when he and others made gifts of valuable shells and pigs to exchange partners with the aim of "raising their name", i.e., achieving high social regard. But even at his most individualistic moments Ongka was deeply conscious of the ultimate postulates of morality guaranteed by the *mi*. On one occasion, on 23 October 1965, he held a *moka* occasion on the ceremonial ground near to his own men's house, at which he gave 31 pigs and 141 valuable pearl shells to various sets of partners. He also gave extra prestige goods such as a cassowary bird and long bamboo tubes of an exotic tree-oil used for decorating the skin at *moka*-dances. His immediate sub-clan members were angry with him for his actions, because he had not waited for them to join him in this event. He gained prestige, while they were left out. The sub-clansmen later refused to help Ongka with a funeral occasion when he had to kill and cook a number of pigs as a sacrifice. Their refusal was a result of their anger, or condition of being *popokl* with him. *Popokl* can lead to sickness in the group (Strathern and Stewart 1999). Those who are *popokl* may themselves get sick, as we have noted above. When he cooked his funeral pigs, Ongka took a leaf of the green cordyline plant (*köyö koema*) which is the *mi* of the

Kawelka, and placed it on his head as an oath, indicating that he himself was not *popokl* and signalling a good state of his *noman* and a wish for reconciliation, since if *popokl* is not dealt with it leads to death in the group. (See A. Strathern 1966: 369-372 for further details on the event sketched here. We have elaborated considerably on this and related topics, utilizing the concept of “sensibility”, in Stewart and Strathern 2002b.) The complex of ideas surrounding *noman*, *mi*, and *popokl* thus constitutes a discursive field in which morality and cosmology blend seamlessly together; and Hagen big-men were, and are, enmeshed in that seamless blend, *at the same time* as they seek various advantages for themselves and their supporters.

The idea of the “exemplar”, then, pertains both to the person acting and to the wider situational context in which actions take place, including the actions of others. The “exemplar” does not illustrate perfection; but it does reveal normative dimensions that at other times are hidden. A moral “event” is one that reveals something which otherwise is not displayed and remains latent, secret, or concealed. The inscrutability of the *noman* itself is much remarked on by Hageners. At the same time they expect “truth” to be revealed (*mot nimba*) and that the spirits and the *mi* are instrumental in this process. Finally, the *mi* is said to have been given by the primordial sky-beings, ultimate custodians of the cosmos, to group-founders, so a foundational cosmology surrounds all actions. In placing the cordyline leaf on his head, Ongka generated that power through his bodily act.

This example may be sufficient to make our point here. It also suggestively indicates how a Christian morality might be grafted onto, or develop from, such an indigenous one. In any case the example makes it clear that simple categories of individuality versus collectivity do not fully grasp how morality works in Hagen. Instead we must concentrate on the relational bases between concepts and actions as the people themselves articulate and exemplify them.

The dialectical see-saw between morality and autonomy that characterized indigenous social life in the Highlands finds itself greatly magnified in the context of electoral contests and the exercise of political power at the national level since Papua New Guinea’s Independence in 1975. In May 2007, on the eve of the elections, a national debate emerged on the theme of corruption in national politics, referring to the fraudulent embezzlement of money and the failure to allocate it effectively to rural welfare and development projects. The debate bade fair to change the political futures for some long-standing parties and individual politicians. The situation is a direct result of the lack of an effective cosmological control over morality such as the idea of the *mi* tended to exercise in Hagen. Christian ideology is increasingly being brought in, as an attempt to fill that gap. At local levels, too, new myths are created to refurbish cosmological frameworks, either in Christian terms or by reworking indigenous myths and rituals (see e.g. Stewart and Strathern 2002a).

The chapters in this excellent volume all grapple with comparable themes to the central point we have made above. John Barker admirably surveys the field in his Introduction, and provides a model account of the inter-relationship between government, customary norms, and the church in what he neatly calls the “postcolonial triangle” in Uiaku. These three forces constitute another discursive field in which morality and cosmology are in interplay. Dan Jorgensen explores “hysteria” in the famed *Rebaibal* (religious revival) outbreak in Telefomin. His account reminds

us of comparable outbreaks of “madness” that have signaled deep moral ruptures and sudden crises in parts of the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea (e.g. Strathern and Stewart 2004: 147), associated with the abrupt early practices of colonial rule. Roger Lohmann uses an extended case-history of a famous individual, in the same general area (Ok) as Jorgensen’s work was carried out in, to explore a classic theme in the study of the deployment of the “will” in a Christianized context. (Joel Robbins also discusses this theme, pointing out how important ideas of the will were to the Urapmin, who also belong to the Ok region.) Lohmann’s case history shows the problematic results that occur when a Christian leader equates his will with the will of God. Such an assertion is an extreme individual statement of a concurrence between morality and cosmology, leading to a possible manipulation of the basic cosmological framework. It is interesting to compare this with the possible results of an extreme Calvinist position regarding salvation. If God has predetermined who is saved, then whatever such a chosen person does they will not lose their salvation, according to this line of thinking. John Buchan, the Scottish novelist, explored this theme at length in his novel “Witch Wood” (Buchan 1927). In this book, church leaders who were strict in their public observances of worship secretly indulged in pagan practices, and in the end one of them justified this by exactly the means mentioned here. In Lohmann’s sensitive portrayal of Diyos we see a character comparably sure of himself, who also however wished to create a post-hoc rationalization and justification for his actions in moral terms. What is exemplified here is basically how not to be an exemplar in the conventional sense of the term.

Also, in this volume Joel Robbins and Doug Dalton provide interesting meditations on the “failure” of big-men and on whether sorcerers may be seen as acting “morally”. Bruce Knauff compares processes of change among the people he studied, the Gebusi, and Burridge’s Tangu. The comparison may prompt us to raise methodological questions about how to take time, space, and history into account in making comparisons, a consideration that also may apply to Bob Tonkinson’s chapter about missionaries in his field area among Australian Aborigines in comparison with Burridge’s portrait of the (ideal?) Christian missionary. Errington and Gewertz take up issues of conflict settlement in a novel context at Ramu Sugar Limited (see Strathern and Stewart 2000c on the concept of “chains of agency” which can help to elucidate the processual patterns they outline). Nancy Lutkehaus gives a sensitive and detailed discussion of moral issues in the narrative of a Catholic nun.

Christian denominations of many kinds in Papua New Guinea have for long joined with government in proclaiming the need for new ways – discourses of modernity. The call of the “Charismatics” for people to experience a kind of spiritual rebirth echoing the early symbolism of conversion and baptism in the Christian church, particularly feeds into such a discourse. The discourse as such is not new. Robert Maher wrote his book “New Men of Papua”, based on the introduction of ideologies of change and development in the Purari area, and published it in 1960. Ken Burridge’s “New Heaven, New Earth” (Burridge 1969) was another early work in this vein with an emphasis on millennarian ideas, which returned also at the turn of the millennium (see for example Stewart and Strathern 1997, 2000b). The internal transformations envisaged correspond to an external reaching out to the worlds

beyond the local level, or even the national level of citizenship, out to transnational influences and networks of varying kinds. New forms of technology via the Internet are used to pursue links with the outside. The basic process of reaching out in this way represents the approach to a wider field of cosmopolitan relations (see Strathern and Stewart 2007b, 2007c, 2007d). New forms and issues of moral relationships are bound to arise in this expanded network. How is information controlled? How is it evaluated and used? What kind of cosmological framework can be devised to evaluate it? These are questions which the next generation of studies in the anthropology of morality may have to be prepared to tackle.

Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart

9 May 2007

Cromie Burn Research Unit

References

- Barker, John (ed.) (1990), *Christianity in Oceania: Ethnographic Perspectives*. ASAO Monograph 12 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America).
- Barker, John (1992), "Christianity in Western Melanesian Ethnography," in James G. Carrier (ed.) *History and Tradition in Melanesian Anthropology*, pp. 144-173 (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Berndt, Ronald M. (1962), *Excess and Restraint* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Buchan, John (1927), *Witch Wood* (Edinburgh and New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd).
- Burridge, Kenelm (1969), *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* (New York: Schocken Books).
- Carrier, James G. (ed.) (1992), *History and Tradition in Melanesian Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Feil, D. K. (1987), *The Evolution of Highland Papua New Guinea Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Godelier, Maurice (1982), "Social hierarchies among the Baruya of New Guinea," in Andrew Strathern (ed.) "Inequality in Highlands New Guinea Societies," pp. 3-34. *Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology*, ed. Jack Goody, no. 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Keck, Verena (2005), *Social Discord and Bodily Disorders: Healing among the Yipno of Papua New Guinea*, for Medical Anthropology Series (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press).
- LiPuma, Edward (2001), *Encompassing Others: the Magic of Modernity in Melanesia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).
- LiPuma, Edward and Benjamin Lee (n.d.) "The Performativity of Ritual Exchange: A Melanesian Example," in, P. J. Stewart and A. Strathern (eds), *Exchange and Sacrifice*, for Ritual Studies Monograph Series (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press).

- Maher, Robert (1960), *New Men of Papua. A Study in Culture Change* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press).
- Reay, Marie Olive (1959), *The Kuma: Freedom and Conformity in the New Guinea Highlands* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press for the Australian National University).
- Sahlins, Marshall D. (1963), "Poor man, rich man, big-man, chief: political types in Melanesia and Polynesia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5: 285-303.
- Scott, Michael W. (2007), *Matrilineages, Making Place, and a Melanesian Christianity in Southeast Solomon Islands*, Ritual Studies Monograph Series, Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern (eds) (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press).
- Stewart, Pamela J. and A. J. Strathern (eds) (1997), *Millennial Markers* Townsville: James Cook University, Centre for Pacific Studies, Townsville, Australia.
- Stewart, Pamela J. and Andrew J. Strathern (2000a). "Introduction: Narratives Speak," in, *Identity Work: Constructing Pacific Lives*, Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern (eds) ASAO (Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania) Monograph Series No. 18. (University of Pittsburgh Press), pp. 1-26.
- Stewart, Pamela J. and A. Strathern (eds) (2000b). "Millennial Countdown in New Guinea," Special Issue of *Ethnohistory* Vol. 47(1), (2000), (Duke University Press).
- Stewart, Pamela J. and A. Strathern (2001), *Humors and Substances: Ideas of the Body in New Guinea* (Westport, Conn. and London: Bergin and Garvey, Greenwood Publishing Group).
- Stewart, Pamela J. and Andrew Strathern (2002a), *Remaking the World: Myth, Mining and Ritual Change among the Duna of Papua New Guinea*, for Smithsonian Series in Ethnographic Inquiry (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press).
- Stewart, Pamela J. and A. Strathern 2002b. *Gender, Song, and Sensibility: Folktales and Folksongs in the Highlands of New Guinea*. Westport, CT and London: Praeger Publishers (Greenwood Publishing).
- Stewart, Pamela J. and Andrew Strathern (2004), *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors, and Gossip*, for New Departures in Anthropology Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Strathern, A. J. (1966), Ceremonial Exchange in the Mount Hagen Area. PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge.
- Strathern Andrew (1981), "'Noman': Representations of Identity in Mt. Hagen," in *The Structure of Folk Models*, edited by Ladislav Holy and Milan Stuchlik, pp. 281-303. (London: Academic Press).
- Strathern, A. J. and Pamela J. Stewart (1998), "Seeking Personhood: Anthropological Accounts and Local Concepts in Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea," *Oceania* Vol. 68, No. 3, March 1998, pp. 170-188.
- Strathern, A. and Pamela J. Stewart (1999), *Curing and Healing: Medical Anthropology in Global Perspective* (Durham N.C: Carolina Academic Press).
- Strathern A. and Pamela J. Stewart (2000a), *Collaborations and Conflicts. A Leader Through Time* (Fort Worth Texas: Harcourt Brace College Publishers).

- Strathern, A. and Pamela J. Stewart (2000b), *Arrow Talk: Transaction, Transition, and Contradiction in New Guinea Highlands History* (Kent, Ohio and London: Kent State University Press).
- Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart (2000c), "Accident, Agency, and Liability in New Guinea Highlands Compensation Practices," *Bijdragen* 156-2: 275-295.
- Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart (2004), *Empowering the Past, Confronting the Future, The Duna People of Papua New Guinea*, for Contemporary Anthropology of Religion Series (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart (2007a), "Actors and Actions in 'Exotic' Places," in *Experiencing New Worlds (Person, Space and Memory in the Contemporary Pacific)* edited by Jurg Wassmann and Katharina Stockhaus. (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books).
- Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart (2007b), Indigenous Cosmopolitanisms. Public lecture presented at the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, on 5 March 2007.
- Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart (2007c), "Shifting Centers, Tense Peripheries: Indigenous Cosmopolitanism," in *United in Discontent*, E. Kirtsoglou and D. Theodossopoulos (eds), forthcoming, (Oxford and New York: Berg).
- Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart (2007d), Series Editors' Preface, "The Complex Pathways of History: Uyghurs and Formations of Identity," in *Situating the Uyghurs*, for, Anthropology and Cultural History in Asia and the Indo-Pacific, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing).
- Valeri, Valerio (2000), *The Forest of Taboos: Morality, Hunting, and Identity among the Huaulu of the Moluccas*, with an Introduction by Janet Hoskins (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press).

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Anthropological Study of Morality in Melanesia¹

John Barker

The chapters in this book are concerned with the ways Melanesians experience and deal with moral dilemmas and with the ways anthropologists make sense of the particularities of others' and their own moral choices. In a variety of ethnographic and theoretical locations, we focus upon public situations and types of persons that exemplify key ethical contradictions for members of moral communities. Such moments and figures serve to make visible central moral assumptions that are otherwise secreted in daily routines and commonsense notions of right and wrong. They do so by threatening the viability of key values, forcing people to make choices which confirm, adjust, or abandon established norms of good and bad conduct. Ethical dilemmas, as entailed in everyday conflicts within communities or enacted by figures like political leaders and religious evangelists, thus provide a strategic point of entry for the study of the key value orientations of a culture. They reveal such orientations, however, at their most vulnerable moments and thus are equally important for what they can tell us about the ways persons and communities react and adjust to changing social conditions. Our main concern here is with Melanesian experience, especially the interface between values associated with indigenous village life and the ethical orientations associated with "modernity." However, we also recognize that anthropologists, missionaries, and other interlocutors engaged with Melanesian peoples also experience characteristic dilemmas that evoke and endanger deeply assumed values. This volume thus ultimately seeks to go beyond Melanesia by drawing attention to the ethical lenses through which outsiders as much as Melanesians come to understand the moral choices that experience throws up before them.

These are not new concerns. Several of the giant figures who laid the foundations of anthropology—Lewis Henry Morgan and Emile Durkheim, for instance—placed the moral at the center of the quest to understand the nature of society. Further, ethnographers have long documented the highly moralistic content of Melanesians'

1 My thanks to Bob Tonkinson, Roger Lohmann, Jeanette Mageo, Pamela Stewart, Andrew Strathern, and the anonymous reviewers of this volume for helpful criticisms and suggestions. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dan Jorgensen for sharing his insights on Burridge's writings and for helping me work through a number of dilemmas encountered in the writing of this essay. Needless to say, I remain responsible—intellectually if not morally—for remaining shortcomings.

discourses and actions in response to everyday conflicts, the challenges thrown up by colonial and post-colonial intrusions and displacements, and aspirations for a better life. All the same, morality has only periodically emerged as a focal concern in anthropological writings. Instead, the tendency has been to subordinate moral issues and experiences to discussions of social control, law, politics, social change or, most broadly, power. Without downplaying social and political contexts, our aim in this book is to elevate morality as a focal concern in the hope of spurring further discussion and opening new lines of research.

Kenelm Burridge is an exception to the above generalization. His scholarly contributions, spanning more than a half century, remains uniquely important for understanding the play of morality in human culture and history. Burridge's pioneering work on "the moralities" in Melanesia and beyond provides the inspiration and starting point for the essays in this volume. Specifically, we work from four "Burridgean" themes. First, rather than detailing codes of conduct or ethical rules, we focus upon dilemmas, conflicts, and confrontations as situations in which moral assumptions are tested, affirmed or changed. Moral conventions, from this point of view, are provisional: subject to modification or abandonment in the face of experience. Second, we pay special attention to types of persons who exemplify neither pure virtue nor evil but rather the moral compromises and contradictions that inform social lives. Third, a subset of the essays builds upon Burridge's writings on millenarian movements to plumb the moral dynamics of Melanesian struggles with modernity, a struggle that has at its core the still unresolved conflict between an ethics founded in reciprocal obligation and one founded upon individualism as mediated by money, consumerism, and Christianity. Finally, a number of the contributors, again following Burridge's lead, examine the figure of the Christian missionary as a key exemplar for Melanesians of the moral perils and promises of the present.

Burridge's seminal contributions provide the essays in this volume with a common touchstone. Still, our purpose is not to pay homage but to bring new insights to a core dimension of Melanesian experience and, more generally, to the anthropological study of morality. All of the authors in this volume are well-established scholars whose contributions draw upon a deep well of fieldwork in specific communities and knowledge of wider regional and theoretical literatures. Most take issue with key aspects of Burridge's thought, not least Robert Tonkinson and F. G. Bailey, who provide lively critiques of Burridge's writings on missionaries, anthropologists, and morality in general. On the whole, the essays engage broadly in current discussions of how we best understand indigenous cultural systems, the historic impacts of colonial and post-colonial agencies, and the moral and political agency of Melanesians themselves.

The remainder of this Introduction is divided into two parts that can be read independently. I begin with an overview of past and current research on morality in Melanesia, particularly in Papua New Guinea and with a focus upon the place of Burridge's writings.² Those who wish to get to the essays immediately can safely

2 While all of the chapters grapple with issues of morality, those by Lohmann, Lutkehaus and Tonkinson more specifically address Burridge's seminal work on Christian missionaries and, to a lesser extent, his related treatise on individuality (Burridge 1979).

skip this part, but may want to read the following section in which I provide a brief synopsis of the chapters and draw attention to a number of common themes.

Anthropological Approaches to Melanesian Morality

The student of morality in Melanesian societies encounters an interesting conundrum: too much and too little information. On the one hand, she or he faces a daunting mountain of relevant data and analysis. Just about any ethnographic study includes information on morality. Indeed, many provide richly textured descriptions of moral precepts, ethical decision-making, and stereotypes. One encounters as well careful explorations of vernacular terms for key moral values that systematically unveil shades of meaning through the exploration of cognate terms, narratives, and contexts in which they are spoken or evoked. The student of morality also faces a wealth of approaches from the varied perspectives of social psychology, cultural symbolism, the logistics of economic systems, and the historical encounter with white people and colonialism, to list a few. The same is true of ethnographic work elsewhere. It is thus misleading to suggest, as some recently have, that anthropologists have neglected morality in ethnographic research, at least in an empirical sense.

Yet it is also the case that until recently few anthropologists writing about Melanesian societies made morality a conceptual center for social analysis. This quickly becomes apparent by examining such justly celebrated studies such as Nancy Munn's *The Fame of Gawa* (1986) or Edward Schieffelin's *The Sorrow of the Lonely and the Burning of the Dancers* (1976). Few if any ethnographies more vividly convey key moral orientations in Melanesian societies. Yet, the terms "moral" and "ethics" rarely appear in their texts and not at all in the indexes. Perhaps because of the challenges of digging out information on morality from most ethnographies, comparative studies are notable by their near complete absence. In my research for this essay, I came up with only two synthetic accounts: Gary Trompf's (1994) massive compilation of information on "payback" across Melanesia and L. L. Langness' (1973) forty-year-old survey of indigenous ethical systems in Papua New Guinea. As in the case of ethnographies, a great deal of comparative analysis does exist relevant to an understanding of morality in the region, but it tends to be embedded in discussions of topics such as social organization, religion, sexuality, and exchange. A number of critics have noted similar patterns in anthropological studies in other regions. James Laidlaw (2002, 312) concludes that "the category of the moral has...almost invariably collapsed in the hands of anthropologists into whatever other terms we have been enthusiastically using to explain collectively sanctioned rules, beliefs, and opinion."

The most obvious objection against treating morality as a distinct category of analysis is that what we call morality is hopelessly mixed up with other domains, such as kinship and politics. Yet to raise this objection is to refute it, for the opposite is also true; yet only the most relativist of anthropologists object to kinship or political

studies. The reluctance to focus on morality, I suspect, derives from a sensitivity to the uncomfortable moral ambiguities of cultural relativism. Anthropologists generally reject the accusation of critics that they are moral relativists; yet those who insist that humans are, at their core, moral beings open themselves up to suspicions that they projecting their own moral assumptions onto others. Burridge's sympathetic treatment of Christian missionaries raises such concerns, as Robert Tonkinson shows in Chapter Ten. In his concluding chapter, F. G. Bailey goes further by suggesting an elevation of the moral in the study of the human condition too easily merges with an authoritarian moralism. Ironically in the face of such concerns, anthropologists display far less reticence in discussing the ethical pitfalls of their own endeavor, perhaps most vividly displayed in the rows over professional conduct that have periodically rocked the American Anthropological Association since the time of the Vietnam War (Gregor and Gross 2004; Robin 2004). Indeed, the deep and abiding concern with the ethics of anthropology stands in sharp contrast to the aversion to thinking about the ethics of anthropological subjects.

It was not always so. E. B. Tylor wrote a section on morality for the third edition of the venerable handbook for anthropological research, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (Garson and Read 1899). Pioneer ethnographers like Diamond Jenness (Jenness and Ballantyne 1920), Bronislaw Malinowski (1929), and F. E. Williams (1930) catalogued moral rules in the societies they studied. A number of later anthropologists such as Meyers Fortes and Kenelm Burridge directly explored the moral dimensions of social and religious life; but most anthropologists tended to deal with morality indirectly, as an aspect of religion, kinship, or social structure. The situation is now changing. A new focus upon morality as an important dimension of social life is clearly emerging, both in the Melanesian literature (e.g., Bashkow 2006; Brison 1992; Kuehling 2005; Robbins 2004; Smith 1994) and in the form of theoretical critiques and programmatic statements (e.g., Cook 1999; Howell 1997; Karlström 2004; Laidlaw 2002; Lambek 2000), reopening old questions and offering new directions of inquiry.

Summarizing what anthropologists have actually written about morality in Melanesian societies is, alas, beyond my abilities for the reasons suggested above: there is too much detail, too many approaches, and too few overviews. In addition, I am keenly aware that the concept of morality can be defined in a wide variety of ways and that these inevitably color one's own perceptions (the same, of course, is true of "politics" or "kinship"). My review focuses on approaches and contributions that appear the most directly relevant to understanding Burridge's framework and, by extension, the analyses developed by the authors of this volume: that is to say, studies that focus on the social dimensions of morality. I thus neglect a variety of other powerful approaches to the subject, notably the work of psychologists and ethno-psychologists (e.g., Epstein 1991; Tietjen and Walker 1985; White 1985); studies focused on semantic and symbolic dimensions of the person, the body, gender, landscapes, and so forth (e.g., Leach 2003; Lepowsky 1993; Strathern 1988); and those dealing with the moral dimensions of economic systems (e.g., Akin and Robbins 1999; Gregory 1982). As for a definition, my preference is to choose an admittedly broad one: morality as that domain of action pertaining to "collectively sanctioned rules, beliefs, and opinions" (Laidlaw 2002, 312).

Thus constrained, anthropological writings on morality in Melanesian societies can be divided into two general categories: those focused upon indigenous societies and those concerned with the entanglements between Melanesians and the colonial and postcolonial world.

Indigenous Moral Systems

Langness's (1973) ethnological survey of ethical systems across Papua New Guinea reveals a great deal of variation in regards to specific rules and expectations, especially regarding sexual activities and spiritual sanctions. Underneath the details, however, lie broad regional patterns. Roughly speaking, anthropologists have approached these patterns from three perspectives: practical ethics dictated by social position, moral rules upholding the social order, and ethical choices thrown up by the typical dilemmas of social life.

I begin with practical ethics. Melanesians have often been characterized as "pragmatic." As Joel Robbins points out in Chapter Two, this has been especially the case in studies of traditional big men, who often as not are described as "master politicians" motivated primarily by the desire to maximize their own authority and prestige. Similarly, many analysts have portrayed local societies as generated out of the actions of individuals who work, interact, and compete not only to survive but to assure the greatest benefits, tangible and intangible, to themselves and their dependents. Hence, many observers have assumed that Melanesian reactions to capitalism, Christianity or the imposition of colonial control have been governed mainly by rational self-interest and a desire for material gain.

While such appraisals of Melanesians as pragmatists tend to sideline considerations of morality, this need not be so. Reo Fortune's early studies of sorcery on Dobu and the Sir Ghost religion of Manus provided textured accounts of two very distinctive systems of practical ethics based respectively on individual resort to malicious magic and the social bounds of households (Fortune 1932; 1936). Fortune's writings, vivid as they are, contain little explicit theoretical commentary. K. E. Read was the first Melanesianist to directly address morality as a theoretical issue, in a justly influential essay on the Gahuku-Gama of the Eastern Highlands. Read's careful analysis is built upon a contrast between the dominant Western and Gahuku-Gama conceptions of the moral person. Westerners tend to view the person as a "unique centre of rationality and free-will" who is subject to a set of moral principles that transcend particular social relationships (Read 1955, 247). The Gahuku-Gama, in contrast, experience themselves as embedded within social relationships; morality is thus dependent "on the position [a person occupies] within a system of inter-personal and inter-group relationships" (1955, 260). In sum, "morality is primarily contextual. The moral judgment does not operate from the fixed perspective of universal obligation for the moral assessment of behavior varies in different social contexts, according, that is, to the different values placed on different individuals in different contexts" (1955, 262). Lacking over-arching moral rules, Gahuku-Gama moral reasoning focuses upon practical consequences of actions: accountable only to each other, individuals experience shame for amoral actions, but not sin (1955, 271).

In a fascinating discussion that anticipates by decades current research on the cultural construction of the person (e.g., Stephen 1995; Strathern 1988), Read explores the correspondence between local conceptions of the physical and psychic body and ethics. His article has been most influential, however, as a demonstration of the effects of social distance on the intensity of moral obligation and the importance of relationships in defining ethical standards. Read's sophisticated study is important in showing that Melanesian "pragmatism" is not simply a matter of "tribalism," of an opposition between an in-group that is unquestionably supported and an out-group perceived as beyond the moral pale. Nor can it be equated to Western utilitarianism or to a universal practical reason (an observation also made by Doug Dalton in Chapter Three). While the Gahuku-Gama evaluate behavior in terms of its consequences, their pragmatism is given shape in specific cultural conceptions of the person and vary according to the relationship in play. Read's analysis, then, opens a rich vein of possibilities for the sustained investigation of moral character in a context defined by shifting social relationships rather than set ethical rules.

Anthropologists have more commonly conceptualized morality as a system of rules regulating social behavior, the second of the three orientations. In one of the earliest anthropological discussions of Melanesian morality, F. E. Williams noted that the unrestrained hostility that Orokaiva displayed towards outsiders formed the outward manifestation of "an intense pride in the group itself" (1930, 313). Behavior within that small circle of kin, affines and allies—later dubbed the "security circle" by Peter Lawrence (1971)—was intensely regulated, mostly by informal but highly effective moral sanctions conveyed in gossip or the threat of sorcery but also by a positive loyalty that Williams attributed to a somewhat mystical "group sentiment" (Williams 1941). From a functionalist perspective, moral dogmas were understood primarily as a type of social mechanism imposing social control by the group over individuals, a set of "quasi-legal sanctions" that both defined and regulated socially-approved behavior (Langness 1973, 195; Lawrence 1984; Malinowski 1926; Young 1971).

The orthodox Durkheimian model which posed "the sacred as the ultimate repository of sociality and moral sentiment" (Jorgensen 1994, 10) likely precluded an expanded place for morality in functionalist studies of Melanesian society. For it seemed to many that, with the exception of a few groups like the Huli or Manus islanders, in Melanesia "there is no relationship between moral rules and supernatural sanctions" (Langness 1973, 189). In the absence of a higher spiritual authority, Melanesian moral codes appeared as a mix of the practical—rules that assure the peace and cooperation necessary for a community's survival—and the arbitrary, a matter of custom. Yet while it is true that the indigenous religions of Melanesians generally lacked deities that enforced moral rules, it is far from evident that the connection between morality and religion was "entirely absent," as has recently been claimed by Jared Diamond (2003; cf. Barker 2004b). Many Melanesians attributed spiritual attacks by sorcerers, spirits, and ghosts to breeches of moral codes. In turn, many people interpreted the health of their bodies or success in subsistence activities as indices of the moral condition of their communities (Frankel 1986). Landscapes, rituals or decorated bodies were also read as as embodiments of the moral health of a community (O'Hanlon 1989).

Perhaps no dimension of indigenous Melanesian life varied as much as religious beliefs and practices. Still, one wonders whether the tendency to downplay or dismiss the religious aspects of Melanesian moral sensibilities derives not so much from the ethnography as from an overly restrictive conception of religion. Consider Raymond C. Kelly's (1993) monumental study of the inequality among the Etoro and their neighbors. Kelly's analysis is complex, providing nuanced assessments of Etoro attitudes and practices concerning conception, gender, witchcraft, politics and marriage. He concludes that the moral order ultimately rests with the "cosmological system [that] provides the foundation for a scheme of social differentiation in which moral evaluation is intrinsically embedded. Social inequality is thus fabricated as a moral hierarchy or hierarchy of virtue" (Kelly 1993, 13). Kelly's book beautifully illustrates the potential of an expanded Durkheimian approach, one that pursues collective representations across the entire spectrum of a people's cosmology.

We come now to the third perspective which focuses upon the dynamics of moral choice. A number of anthropologists advocating a renewal of attention to morality have called for a deployment of "the Aristotelian conception of moral praxis to counterbalance Durkheimian collectivism with a focus on conscious moral agency" (Karlström 2004, 609; e.g., Laidlaw 2002; Lambek 2000; Robbins 2004). Social experience continually yields up situations that force individuals to make ethical decisions. They may arise in reaction to individuals who break the rules, to changed circumstances that bring moral certainties into doubts, to contingencies that compel choices between moral alternatives. From this perspective, moral orders are always tentative, based upon a shifting consensus that members return to and revise in the face of experience. It is this perspective that mainly informs the studies in this volume.

Reo Fortune's (1936) superb ethnography of the Sir Ghost religion of Peri village on Manus Island provides the earliest fully realized study of the moral dynamics of a Melanesian society. More than two thirds of the monograph is taken up by a "Diary of Religious Events" detailing some 43 case studies of moral breaches and conflicts. The Manus, the reader learns, are profoundly concerned with morality, not least because it is near impossible to live up to its requirements in the face of competing interests and the inconstant attention of one's spiritual patron. The same insight informs much of Kenelm Burridge's ethnographic work on the Tangu of Madang Province in the early 1950s. Like Fortune (and very much like his contemporaries in the Manchester school of anthropology), Burridge focused much of his attention upon social conflicts. Burridge's approach, however, was far more schematic, making it easier to generalize from his ethnographic findings. Indeed, Burridge makes clear in his most read book, *Mambu* (1960) as well as later work, that he regards the Tangu as a template for the general moral predicament of Melanesian societies.

As Bruce Knauff shows in Chapter Four, the Tangu are one of several Melanesian cultures (including the Gebusi) who place an extraordinarily high value upon reciprocal equivalence. The Tangu speak of an idealized (if unpronounceable!) state of *mngwotngwotiki* : a perfect balance between reciprocating partners who thus transcend the obligations of ordinary life. This is an "Eutopian" position of social amity—that is to say, a realizable ideal that "designates a place of happiness

and order” (Karlström 2004, 596).³ The problem for Tangu is that reciprocity in general, and equivalence in particular, form a flimsy basis for securing the social world. The social order is constantly challenged by contingencies and self-interested actions—the failure of a garden, the refusal of a sibling to share food, a big man’s efforts at self-promotion—and by the sheer impossibility of maintaining balanced reciprocity with more than a few people at a time. Beyond this, the moral world as imagined and experienced, is subject to transformative interventions by forces that impinge upon its boundaries: non-reciprocal entities like ghosts, sorcerers, mythical figures, dreams, and Europeans. Tangu place these in the category of *imbatekas*—“uncontrollable, odd, unobliged, queer, singular, anomalous, evil, wicked, bad”—the key characteristics, Burridge argues, of the Melanesian conception of the “divine” (Burridge 1969b, 134). The moral order is thus inherently provisional (Jorgensen 1994, 13). Tangu face a double predicament: the near impossibility of achieving social amity within the moral community and the inherently tentative nature of that same order in the face of divine interventions and revelations.

The Tangu represent an extreme instance of a more general pattern across Melanesia. The point is not merely that reciprocity forms the pivot of Melanesian epistemologies (Trompf 1994), but that the contradictions and limitations of reciprocal moral orders generate characteristic social dilemmas that ramify widely within witchcraft and sorcery beliefs (Knauff 1985; Schieffelin 1976), mythologies (Burridge 1969a; LeRoy 1985; Schwimmer 1973), and warfare and peacemaking (Harrison 1993; Meggitt 1977; Strathern 1971).

In his approach to understanding the dynamics of Tangu morality, Burridge emphasizes subjectivity: the developing awareness of moral actors rather than pragmatic schemes or abstracted ethical rules. This leads him to focus upon types of persons—big men, sorcerers, ordinary men and rubbish men—who are important not so much for what they accomplish as for what they exemplify for those who observe and interact with them. And what they exemplify, as Robbins and Dalton show in their contributions to this volume, is not so much ideals as the characteristic perils, contradictions, potentialities, and follies of social life. Big men and sorcerers are of special fascination for community members and anthropologists alike, as they operate on the edges of the moral community, taking on aspects of the divine themselves as they both reinforce and transcend moral limits. Nowhere has this perspective been more powerfully evoked than in Michele Stephen’s (1995) empathic study of Mekeo chiefs and sorcerers, the inherently fascinating, inspirational, frightening, and ultimately tragic “men of kindness” and “men of sorrow.” Such figures, real and imagined, act as moral exemplars, instructing both members of the community and the anthropologists peering over their shoulders as to the limits of the moral order.

Morality in Contemporary Melanesia

The three perspectives on indigenous morality in Melanesian societies are by no means mutually exclusive, yet they lead in different directions. This becomes apparent when they are applied to understanding the Melanesian confrontation with

3 The term was originally coined by Thomas More in the Foreword to *Utopia*.

modernity in its various guises. From the perspective of practical ethics, Melanesians appear malleable, ready to adjust their value orientations to take as much advantage as they can of the opportunities that have come their way following colonization. Indeed, to many observers during the heady period of business expansion in the late colonial period, it seemed that indigenous culture had pre-adapted many Melanesians (particularly Highlands big men) to the aggressively individualistic ethos of capitalism (Finney 1973). For those who take the second position—viewing morality as a system of rules upholding local social systems—compromise between indigenous and Western systems appear far more difficult, if not impossible. Their studies thus tend to divide between those emphasizing the persistence of old values in modern settings (e.g., Kahn 1986; Leach 2003; Lawrence 1964) and, alternatively, those documenting the collapse of indigenous orders followed either by the wholesale adoption of Western values or a descent into chaos (e.g., Mead 1966; Tuzin 1997).

The third perspective—the one we pursue in this volume—shifts the focus of attention from particular values and systems to the existential problem of moral integrity. It is still possible to discern broad differences in orientation between indigenous and Western values, but the focus upon subjectivity works to destabilize the assumption of moral coherence we find in the other two frameworks. Moral integrity founded on equivalence among Tangu, Burridge insists, is not a given but an obligatory ideal impossible to achieve. While self-willed action is circumscribed and subject to moral denunciation, it is all the same necessary for survival. Big men are intensely scrutinized precisely because they finess the contradictions between collective morality and individualism. The implication, according to Dan Jorgensen (1994, 133), is that in Melanesia “the conventions of human order are always provisional,” subject to modification by self-willed actions of individuals and the ultimately unknowable transcendent (amoral) interventions of the “divine.” The upshot is that Melanesian societies have a radically “improvisatory nature” (Jorgensen 1994, 135; cf. Wagner 1972; 1981). The perspective thus “gives us a means of understanding how a supposedly traditional people can generate radical transformations in thoroughly traditional ways” (Jorgensen 1994, 133).

The paradox identified by Jorgensen lies at the heart of Burridge’s (1960; 1969b) seminal work on cargo cults. During the colonial period, Europeans—particularly patrol officers and missionaries—entered the Melanesian pantheon of moral exemplars, scrutinized like big men, sorcerers, and rubbish men. As Dalton notes in Chapter Three, Europeans acted much like sorcerers: powerful, autonomous, and unencumbered by any sense of obligation to share their great wealth with villagers. At the same time, their imposition of authority and refusal to engage in reciprocity brought intense shame in its suggestion that Melanesians were both unequal and unworthy, merely rubbish. The arrival of European colonial agents, in sum, posed a radical challenge in its suggestion that the reciprocities that grounded communities might no longer apply, a prospect that was at once threatening and liberating. Already primed to the embrace of change in the face of newly revealed truths, Melanesians responded to the challenge with a remarkable creativity. Some generated new mythologies out of older narratives and snatches of the Bible, attempting to discern the deeper truths of their unsettled times; many embraced the new churches and took up the challenge of rebuilding their moral communities around cooperative

economic enterprises; and still others followed the siren call of cargo prophets who embodied in their teachings and actions the promise of a new moral integrity, a new heaven and new earth.

Although focused upon events that occurred more than a half century ago, Burridge's diagnosis of the key moral dilemmas engendered by colonialism has turned out to be remarkably prescient of the current situation. Writing in 2006, Ira Bashkow observes:

People throughout Melanesia display a similar ambivalence toward individual autonomy, which, while necessary for personal influence and success, is inherently undermining of the ideal of egalitarian unity and the social harmony necessary for collective wealth and well-being; and they share a dependence on land as a symbolic anchor for people's identity, as well as the only truly reliable source of wealth and security. All Papua New Guineans comfortably contrast themselves with whitemen from the viewpoint of such premises (Bashkow 2006, 220-21).

Bashkow's generalization is well documented in the ethnographic literature on local communities in Papua New Guinea, including the case studies in this volume. Further, the literature suggests that many communities feel the contradictions between the ideal of egalitarian unity and individual autonomy extremely intensely. They anticipate momentous change: the breakdown of the old sociality leading either to chaos or its total replacement with something new. This exists mainly as a kind of low-level buzz much of the time—a condition Joel Robbins describes as “everyday millenarianism” (2001a; cf. Bashkow 2000; Burridge 1960, 1-13)—periodically breaking out into open into full-scale millenarian movements, although these days more likely to be expressed in terms of Christian apocalyptic themes than classic cargoism (Kocher-Schmid 1999; Stewart and Strathern 2000).

That Melanesians continue to grapple with the tensions between, broadly speaking, communitarian values founded on reciprocal exchange and individualism can be partly explained, as Bashkow suggests, by the strong attachment people have for their ancestral lands. An estimated 80 percent of Papua New Guineans live in rural areas, almost entirely on ancestral lands, and most of the urban-based populations also maintain strong sentimental and practical connections to their communities of origin. The increasing exposure and dependence upon money and commodities, the ever expanding presence of major resource extraction projects, participation in Western-based educational and political systems, and encounters with global consumer images and fundamentalist Christianity—these and other facets of modernity accentuate the moral contradiction by posing a direct challenge to the types of sociality based upon communal ownership of land. Without downplaying such factors, however, the pervasiveness of the moral contradiction Melanesians feel between communal and individual values suggests we are also dealing with a deep-set cultural pattern. By this, I don't mean to suggest that Melanesians are locked into a “traditional” epistemology, at least as long as they mostly depend upon subsistence gardening on communally-owned lands (Lawrence 1964, 273). Rather, the point is that Melanesians experience the contradiction of values as a “point of concern”: something worth arguing over in large part because it is experienced as commonsensical and fundamental (Laitin 1986, 175). As Burridge's analysis suggests,

this focal concern pre-dates the arrival of Europeans and, from the beginning of the colonial era, has both driven and shaped the ways Melanesians have confronted the challenges of the colonial and postcolonial world.

Neoliberal advocates for “progress,” including much of the tiny business and political elite in independent Melanesian states, tend to view the strong ties most Melanesians feel towards the land and their insistence on compensation for its use as signs of backwardness, of an inability to make the transition from a traditional to modern society (Gewertz and Errington 1999; Smith 2002). Ethnographic analysis suggests a very different picture. Considered as a morally-charged point of concern, the tension between communal and individual values has been remarkably productive, ramifying into a wide variety of accommodations and, often, radical changes. Significant as they often are, the changes do not obviate the underlying point of concern, giving the outcomes a distinctly Melanesian cast.

The dilemma of reconciling moral equivalence with individual willfulness is most apparent—or, perhaps more accurately, mostly studied—at the level of local communities. Yet Melanesians, like most other people, live out their lives in reference to several social and ideological contexts. The primary dilemma of Melanesian morality assumes different forms and propels different outcomes depending upon the type and scale of the context in which it occurs. Roughly, one can distinguish four such contexts: local communities, *wantok* networks,⁴ modernist institutions, and “imagined communities” (the nation, Christendom, indigenous peoples, and so forth).

Ethnographic monographs produced over the past twenty years or so provide the most vivid examples of “radical transformations generated in thoroughly traditional ways” in local contexts. The market economy, state institutions like schools and medical services, and churches have expanded into even the most remote parts of the region, although the nature and degree of local exposure has been quite uneven. A tiny number of traditionalists have erected barriers around their communities, most famously the mountain Kwaio of Malaita (Keesing 1992). The vast majority, however, have either succumbed to or eagerly embraced such economic opportunities and new identities as have come their way. The historical depth and density of connections to state and global networks and institutions play a large role in conditioning adjustments in the local communities. At the same time, case studies reveal that even in the communities most tightly integrated into the cash economy or urbanized environments, indigenous customs, social institutions, and values remain vital to people’s lives (Goddard 2005; Tateyama 2006). Forms of kinship grouping or exchange obligations, for instance, may radically change but persist in recognizable forms (Carrier and Carrier 1989). As Bruce Knauft and many others have argued, the persistence of indigenous elements should not be understood in a simple sense as resistance to modernity but rather as subaltern patterns of being “locally modern” (Knauft 2002a; cf. Englund and Leach 2000).

Anthropologists have a proclivity to view the persistence of indigenous patterns as evidence of cultural continuity. This has long been challenged by neo-Marxist and

4 Neo-Melanesian for “one talk,” those who share a common language and tribal identity.

world systems theorists, who observe correctly that capitalism is quite compatible with a wide variety of local social arrangements. More recently, it has been challenged by ethnographers who have pointed to the centrality of rupture in the ways that many Melanesians describe their relationship with their pre-modern past (Robbins 2007). Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of change in many places has been the often violent rejection of formerly central cults and associated material culture and exchanges, usually condemned as “of Satan” (Jebens 2005; Tuzin 1997). What is not in dispute is that Melanesians experience the social challenges they face not as a simple choice between two types of society or economies, but as moral conflict, a matter of what it means to be a good person. The tension between the reciprocal values that make life secure in still largely subsistence-based communities and the enlarging sphere of individual choice resists resolution and is often experienced as an ongoing state of moral crisis or turmoil (Brison 1992; Robbins 2004). Interestingly, as Knauff suggests in Chapter Four, a common sense of crisis appears to be generating different patterns of response. Coastal areas that have had the earliest exposure to colonial rule and are most deeply integrated into national and international networks tend to be more tolerant of moral ambiguity. Many, like the Maisin (Chapter Five), assume pluralistic identities as villagers, citizens, and Christians (e.g., White 1991). Groups that are less well-integrated are more likely to adopt radical solutions, usually strongly colored by Christian fundamentalism, as a means of overcoming their intense shame and of achieving their desires (e.g., Kulick 1992).⁵

A majority of Melanesians today have spent a least part of their lives living outside their ancestral communities and a rapidly growing minority now resides permanently in the towns. Most maintain contacts with kin and tribesmen back home and in their new locations. Such *wantok* networks form a second level of social inclusion with its own distinctive moral dynamics. While moral equivalence is a central theme at all four levels, here it assumes its most insistent expression. For many rural families, the export of labor provides a key and often the only means of securing cash and commodities. The moral dogma of reciprocal obligation is the chief mechanism by which rural folk pressure those kin fortunate enough to secure jobs to remit a large part of their earnings back home (Carrier and Carrier 1989). For their part, migrants rely on the same moral logic to get assistance from employed kin in finding work, to compel assistance in illegal activities especially from unemployed *wantoks*, and to insure a welcome back home if and when they return. The stakes and associated pressures are immense. Even the most conscientious migrants usually fail to meet the high expectations of their relatives and, of course, many succumb to the various opportunities and temptations of life outside of the villages. As Jorgensen’s evocative portrait of a returning mine worker in Chapter Seven shows, individuals caught in the moral contradictions of the *wantok* system often pay a high psychological price.

5 The distinction I’m making is most poignantly illustrated in Errington and Gewertz’s description of an educational visit by a Mari delegation, on whose lands sits the giant Ramu Sugar project, to the Tolai. Greatly depreciating their own cultural traditions, the Mari were amazed by the evident wealth of the Tolai and their pride in their own ancestral customs (Errington and Gewertz 2004).

The two higher levels of social inclusion have received far less scholarly attention, especially from anthropologists. Yet they have clearly become very important in postcolonial times as state institutions, global church networks, commodities and migration to urban areas have increased their hold over the population. By “modernist institutions”—my third level—I mean those organizations funded from within the cash economy, that arrange their operations according to rationalized codes and rules that set out individual duties and expectations and that bring together, as employees and recipients, people without regard to their indigenous cultural affiliations. Such organizations include schools, medical facilities, banks, and private businesses. As Errington and Gewertz show in their compelling analysis of the clashes and settlements sought by various parties associated with the massive Ramu sugar project (Chapter Six), such institutions seem to invite the most acute conflicts. While much more research is required, their study along with what can be picked up from newspaper reports and anecdotal evidence suggests that the clashes pivot on two points of tension. The first and most severe is between moral claims based upon indigenous dogmas of equivalence and the instrumental orientations (providing educational services, making a profit and so forth) that guide the institutions. Such claims can be made by any person engaged with the institution, but the most typical and difficult clashes concern compensation demands by local peoples to reciprocate for land and other resources used by the institution in question. The second point of tension lies in contrary moral expectations, based in large part on different customary practices, of the various people brought together within modernist institutions. The notion of what constitutes an ethical breach as much as the appropriate response can vary considerably between different groups of Melanesians.

Those on the receiving end of claims are likely to view them as forms of extortion—and not without reason. Compensation claims quickly escalate to extravagant levels and are often accompanied by threats of violence (Filer 1998). For all of their political effects, however, they clearly draw from a deep well of strongly moralized assumptions contemporary Melanesians make concerning their affiliations with and obligations to their *wantoks* and ancestral lands. This brings us to the fourth level of social inclusion: the imagined nation and, beyond that, global communities based on shared identities as Christians, consumers, indigenous peoples or human beings sharing certain inalienable rights. From the perspective of such imagined communities, Melanesians find much that is morally troubling: the battles over compensation, the nepotism and corruption entailed in the *wantok* system, the rising levels of tribal warfare in the rural areas and gang violence in the towns, the spread of prostitution and along with it violence against women and the scourge of AIDS, among much else. Such issues generate a great deal of public talk—in the newspapers, in sermons, in radio shows, in political campaigns—talk that evokes the widest possible range of ethical choice. It is also at this level that one encounters the most explicit formulations of moral codes and causes, often in competition for the hearts and minds of the people. Thus Melanesians find themselves confronted not just with moral choices but choices between moralists ranging from Christian fundamentalists, who promote stringent personal behavioral codes based on denial, to the creators of consumer advertising who celebrate the joys of material hedonism (Foster 2002; Gibbs 2000). Increasingly, the elite is drawn into a globally

based politics of morality that insists upon a sharp distinction between indigenous and “Western” values but agrees on little else (Bennett and Shapiro 2002). Thus environmentalists celebrate the supposed communal values of “traditional” society even as human rights activists call for changes in supposedly traditional customs that deny political and economic security to women (Barker 2004a; Douglas 2003). Debates within Melanesian elites often focus on the presumed opposition between traditional and modern values (Narakobi 1980), whether the subject is the payment of brideprice (Filer 1985), the causes of gang violence (Dinnen 2001), women’s rights (Macintyre 1998), economic failure in the rural areas (Gewertz and Errington 1999), or the spreading HIV/AIDS pandemic (Hammar 1998). From this perspective, the claim to moral legitimacy based upon one’s cultural heritage begins to appear as one item in a marketplace of alternative ethical codes.

The national and global moral ideologies circulating in modern Melanesia, however, appeal to much wider populations than the elites. People have quite diverse reasons and opportunities for engagement. For some, membership in a group with a strong exclusivist identity enforced by a restrictive moral code, like the Seventh-Day Adventists or the Mormons, provides at least a partial release from the moral obligations of the *wantok* system. Many are attracted to creeds like the Prosperity Gospel (Coleman 2000), accepting at least for a time its strictures on personal behavior in the hopes of material returns in the near future. The moral rhetoric employed by environmental and human rights activists has also been taken up by local peoples as they battle to extract support or to protect themselves from projects hatched by government agencies and corporations (West 2006; cf. Tsing 2005). Ironically, the conditions that encourage receptivity to moral identities based upon imagined national and global communities have contributed to the social and political fracturing of the region by giving voice to a diversity of moral dogmas, ideologies and agendas that exist in varying states of tension with each other.

The conditions of modernity that have fractured local communities and created new layers of real and imagined social orders also give rise to new types of morally exemplary persons. As noted earlier, the most pervasive is the figure of the “whiteman.” The actual European presence in most parts of Melanesia has declined dramatically since the 1970s and it is doubtful that most Melanesians have had much direct interaction with the dwindling number who remain. Still, the “whiteman” has proven good to think with: a stereotype upon which to project ambivalent feelings about the hard moral choices of the present (Bashkow 2006; Smith 1994). Today the whiteman shares the contemporary moral stage with a host of other figures such as politicians, businessmen, and church leaders. As Nancy Lutkehaus’s evocative account of a young indigenous nun suggests in Chapter Nine suggests, the range of figures is expanding in tandem with the fracturing of social experience.

As with the traditional figures of big men and sorcerers, modern moral exemplars serve not so much as role models as visible manifestations of the potentials, paradoxes, and limits of moral action. Such figures fascinate, inspire, and repel as they test the edges of morality, whether in terms of obligations to *wantoks* or the ethical dogmas of the church. Politicians provide an instructive example. They are often reviled by the populace for corruption; yet every election cycle in Papua New Guinea attracts hordes of contenders for office, all promising and many no doubt sincerely believing

in their own integrity. Flawed and inspirational, prominent politicians like Michael Somare or the late Iambakey Okuk⁶ come across as larger than life for many citizens. Although the topic has barely been explored, it is likely that other classes of moral exemplars are emerging that, like the sorcerer or rubbish man, are seen as crossing over into the dark side of immorality. In a brief but very suggestive discussion, Akin and Robbins (1999, 36-37) nominate a figure they call a “bitter man.” The bitter man is someone who attracts wealth but uses it exclusively for his own selfish benefit, obscenely mixing aspects of big and rubbish men. A bitter man may appear as a monster to many, but at the same time “a pillar of the community in its transition to modernity” for others (*ibid*). By the same token, even the most saintly of moral exemplars, given their access to personal riches or the favor of God, can very easily cross over the line of acceptable ethical action and take on the appearance of a bitter man. As Lohmann illustrates in Chapter Eight, with a poignant account of the rise and fall of an indigenous evangelist, modern exemplars as much as their traditional forebears are often, in the final analysis, tragic figures. For many, they stand for moral certainty and thus the crushing disappointment (or secret delight) when they come up short or fall. Ultimately, they represent the inherent contradictions of moral obligation, the paradoxes of ethical choice.

The Chapters

The general purpose of this Introduction is to explore some of the ways anthropologists have thought about the moral dimensions of Melanesian society and to suggest their continuing relevance to our understandings of contemporary life. The chapters that follow illustrate some of the main dimensions of an anthropological exploration of the moral aspects of Melanesian experience in terms of dilemmas and the persons who exemplify them. The first eight studies range across Papua New Guinea (unfortunately excluding the Highlands region). They further range across a variety of typical moral exemplars, beginning with indigenous big men and ending with a Catholic nun, as well as the types of moral dilemmas people encounter within contemporary village communities, multi-ethnic work settings, and regional networks. The final two chapters take a more theoretical stance, going beyond the detailed ethnography of Melanesia to consider the ethical implications of Kenelm Burridge’s writings on Melanesians, missionaries, and anthropologists. The volume concludes with a brief Epilogue by Kenelm Burridge, reflecting upon the major themes.

The volume opens with two studies that explore aspects of indigenous moral systems operating at the village level. Recalling Burridge’s seminal work on big men and sorcerers, both Robbins and Dalton position their analyses to highlight not just the cultural particulars of the Urapmin and Rawa but to comment on what

6 One of the most colorful and certainly controversial of Papua New Guinea’s first generation of politicians, Okuk established his big man credentials in national elections by spectacular public ceremonies in which he gave away hundreds of cases of beer accompanied by lavish promises of development projects. Segments of his mostly Highland supporters went on a rampage when Okuk died of cancer in 1986, convinced that he had been poisoned (Dorney 2000).

they perceive as the intrinsic connections between morality, power, and the human condition.

Chapter 2, “Morality, Politics and the Melanesian Big Man” by Joel Robbins, opens the volume with a reconsideration of the moral position occupied by that most famous of Melanesian figures, the big man. Big men have usually been represented in ethnographic writing as the epitome of pragmatic politicking, as actors who through superior personal attributes seek mainly to advance their own authority and prestige. Robbins argues that this is an impoverished view that reflects a tacit assumption, drawn from experience in Western societies, of an essentialized division between politics and morality. Taking up an argument first advanced by Burridge (1975) in his essay on “The Melanesian Manager,” Robbins shows that among the Urapmin, a Min group in Sandaun (West Sepik) Province, that big men are important to their followers as much for the way they model the moral difficulties of social life in their communities as for their shrewd sense of the demands of *realpolitik*. The chapter moves toward a demand for a renewed political anthropology that refuses to take the modern separation between the realm of politics and the morality of everyday social life for granted.

In Chapter 3, Doug Dalton’s “When is it Moral to Be a Sorcerer?” takes up Burridge’s other key figure. While the sorcerer would at first blush appear to be a figure of evil in contrast to the moral uprightness of the big man or manager, his position is ethically ambiguous. Drawing from fieldwork among the Rawa as well as the rich literature on sorcery and witchcraft across Melanesia, Dalton explores the mutually defining relationship between sorcerers and leaders in indigenous thought and experience. Viewed in historical perspective, Rawa sorcerers have tended to gain prominence at times of social upheaval during which they have served as moral change agents. From their own perspective, Rawa sorcerers are as much captured by their social circumstances as their victims and thus, in their own lights, act morally even as, to others, they appear as the epitome of evil. The conundrum of the moral sorcerer, Dalton argues, poses a challenge to some of the fundamental assumptions of the main schools of ethical theory in the Western tradition. He provocatively suggests that the “emotivist” or intuitive ethics exemplified by the Rawa sorcerer resonates best with the ethical writings of certain existential thinkers, particularly Kierkegaard.

The next three chapters focus upon the historical transition of Melanesian societies into what many gloss as “modernity.” The introduction of money and commodities, western education, national political institutions, and Christianity has profoundly affected Melanesian moral consciousness, generally in the direction of more individualistic assumptions concerning agency and responsibility. The transition parallels that found in many other parts of the world. Yet here as elsewhere morality continues to bear the stamp of local moral conceptions and obsessions, often with very deep roots in the indigenous soil. The post-colonial landscape of Melanesia thus makes room for a giddy mix of Christian revivalism, witch crazes, and dreams of massive economic development (Eves 2000; Kocher-Schmid 1999; cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1993). These three chapters document the roles played by indigenous and imported moral values as different groups of Melanesians struggle to become, in Knauff’s (2002a) useful phrase, “locally modern.”

Chapter 4, “From Moral Exchange to Exchanging Morals” by Bruce Knauft, provides a detailed comparison of the Tangu and Gebusi peoples of the Western Province. The two groups shared many common features during the early contact period, most notably a radical regime of existential equivalence through direct exchange. For the Gebusi, this included not only sister exchange and direct reciprocity at feasts but frequent retaliatory murders of men suspected of practicing sorcery. The two societies, however, reacted differently to colonial intrusion. While the imposition of government controls, the teachings of missionaries, and the experience of the cash economy challenged Tangu moral assumptions, driving them at times to join in cargo cult activities, the culture remained resolutely fixated on the moral ideal of equivalence. The Gebusi, on the other hand, seem to have been positively eager to surrender their political and moral autonomy—along with many other features of their culture—in return for the hierarchical and non-reciprocal order represented by the government and missions. The differences can be partially explained in terms of a range of localized and historical contingencies: the changes that Knauft traces for the Gebusi occurred some three decades after Burridge completed his study of the Tangu and after Papua New Guinea had gained political Independence and the Gebusi are far more remote from the urban centers of the country than Tangu. Still, Knauft’s study isolates key dynamics and points of comparison which could be fruitfully applied elsewhere in comparative studies of moral transformation. Of these, none seem to be more central than the transformative role played by mission churches and Christianity, a theme taken up more directly in several other chapters.

My chapter, “All Sides Now,” also pursues the theme of adaptations between an indigenous society and colonial and postcolonial agencies, in this case the Maisin people of Oro (Northern) Province. In his classic study *Mambu*, Burridge argued that cargo cults emerged historically from a “total complex” defined by the interactions of villagers, missionaries, and administrative officers, which he referred to as the “Triangle” (1960, 141). By the early 1980s, the Maisin had localized the Triangle, its sides corresponding to types of leaders and activities in village life. I suggest that the Triangle held more significance to Maisin as a kind of moral framework than political or administrative device, one that reflected their plural identities as a cultural group, as citizens, and as Christians. I discuss the inherent tensions between these identities as imagined by the Maisin both in general terms and in a community meeting. The chapter thus adds an additional counter example to the Gebusi experience by showing how Maisin, like the Tangu and many other long-contacted coastal people, have worked out shifting and often shaky compromises between indigenous and introduced ethical orientations. I speculate at the end that colonial policies in Papua New Guinea in many instances actually enhanced the possibility of pluralism and compromise. This is less true in the post-colonial period. The Maisin have today left the Triangle behind and are both experiencing and experimenting with more individually oriented forms of moral reasoning and behaviors.

In Chapter 6, Frederick Errington and Deborah Gewertz focus upon an ethnographic site very different the those usually studied by anthropologists in Melanesia: an enormous sugar plantation and factory brought into existence after Papua New Guinea’s Independence and which today provides employment and a home for hundreds of workers from across the country as well as a small number of

expatriate administrators. “Reconfiguring Amity at Ramu Sugar Limited” presents a series of disputes the authors witnessed at Ramu between various parties thrown together by the enterprise. A rhetoric of “amity” based upon notions of balanced reciprocity pervades the quarrels in ways that remind one of Burridge’s classic description of disputes among the Tangu. There is thus a strong resonance between the ethical assumptions described by Errington and Gewertz and those one still encounters in the village societies described in other chapters. This suggests that the moral consciousness of diverse Papua New Guineans have together worked to shape interactions at places like Ramu Sugar. At the same time, Ramu Sugar like other “modern” situations creates its own moral possibilities and imperatives. As claims follow counter-claims in the disputes, Errington and Gewertz show how moral appeals to equity shift into shake-downs and calls for mutual engagement slide into struggles for political and economic advantage. As it engages with the emerging new realities of class division and increasing economic inequalities, the old rhetoric of amity based upon moral equivalence has proven agile in taking on a variety of new instrumental uses—as a means of forcing employed relatives to share their money; as a way of compelling companies to part with large sums of cash for compensation; and as a way for politicians to mask over their personal advantages by conspicuous gift-giving to followers.

The final three ethnographic chapters focus upon individuals whose actions exemplify new moral possibilities under the expanding conditions of modernity.

Dan Jorgensen opens this section with “Changing Minds: Hysteria and the History of Spirit Mediumship in Telefolmin.” The chapter focuses upon the intriguing figure of the *spirit meri*—female mediums of the Holy Spirit who precipitated a charismatic movement known as *Rebaibal* among the Telefolmin and their neighbors (including the Urapmin and Asabano, discussed by Robbins and Lohmann) during the 1970s. During the time of *Rebaibal*, the spirit women exemplified a capacity for moral critique and the embrace of new moral assumptions that Burridge earlier identified as the central dynamic in millenarian movements. Their actions compelled an entire society to change its minds, abandoning the traditional men’s cult for Evangelical Christianity. These historic transformations were preceded and accompanied by moments of hysteria marked by episodes of violent shaking. While observers tended to regard outbreaks of hysteria on the part of most individuals with concern, spirit women convincingly reinterpreted the state as a sign of the Holy Spirit’s presence and themselves as conduits for the healing power of the Christian god. They apply such healing, in turn, to deal with the pathologies (including forms of hysteria) suffered by individuals caught in the stresses and strains that have emerged in the wake of the massive Ok Tedi gold and copper project, which employed many local men and created an immediate economic boom.

Chapter 8, “Morals and Missionary Positionality: Diyos of Duranmin” by Roger Ivar Lohmann, focuses on one of the key figures leading the Min peoples, including the Telefolmin and Urapmin, to Christianity in the 1970s. Making effective use of interview excerpts accompanied by exegesis based upon his extensive ethnographic research among the Asabano, Lohmann relates the story of the rise and fall of a remarkable indigenous missionary. Diyos first learned of Christianity at the feet of Australian Baptist missionaries. Revelations and visions from the Christian god led

him to establish an independent pastoral college. When *Rebaibal* started, Diyos was able to send out pastors to guide local people's passionate rejection of the elaborate male cults into the establishment of locally-run churches. Lohmann extends Burridge's (1991) analysis of the cultural dynamics of the European missionary movement to Diyos. The move is a significant one. Scholars have long acknowledged that Pacific Island evangelists vastly outnumbered European missionaries and usually played the most immediate and largest role in spreading Christianity (Brock 2005). Yet the tendency has been to sharply distinguish between the two parties, both in terms of their motivations and impacts. While sensitive to cultural nuance and historic contingency, Lohmann's study discovers a common dynamic at the heart of all missionary endeavors, one that propels missionaries towards moral critique of community but at the same time tempts them to conflate their own actions with the will of God.

Nancy C. Lutkehaus also focuses upon the figure of the indigenous missionary in the next chapter, "'In the Way' in Melanesia: Modernity and the 'New Woman' in Papua New Guinea as Catholic Missionary Sister." Lutkehaus' contribution would be significant even if she limited herself to a basic narration of the central story in her chapter, the entrance of an Iatmul woman into the Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart. Indigenous female missionaries, past and present, are virtually invisible in the literature, although, as Jorgensen's chapter suggests, women have taken a leading role in Christian conversion and life in Oceanic societies (Douglas 2003). Lutkehaus' sophisticated analysis goes much further, examining the interconnecting themes of this religious order at the levels of individuals like Gabriella, the communities they come out of (and for which they provide an exemplar of a new type of woman), and the international Church. Drawing creatively upon Burridge's (1979; 1991) analysis of the cultural dynamics of Christianity, individuality, and missionary endeavors, she argues that the Papua New Guinea women now becoming nuns do so in the context of confrontations between the "traditional" moral systems that greatly constrain the roles available to women and the widening opportunities provided by modern science and economics that led large numbers of women to choose missionary vocations in the West more than a century ago.

The book concludes with two chapters that go literally beyond Melanesia both in subject matter and thematically. Their immediate focus is Burridge's writings on Christian missionaries and on morality in general. Their observations, however, speak more generally to the ethical quandaries of an anthropology of morality.

In Chapter 10, "*Homo Anthropologicus* in Aboriginal Australia: 'Secular Missionaries,' Christians and Morality in the Field," Robert Tonkinson returns to Burridge's analysis of missionaries. Rather than focusing on its implications for understanding missionary motivations, along the lines pursued by Lohmann and Lutkehaus, Tonkinson concerns himself with the moral and political implications of missionary endeavors upon indigenous peoples, comparing both their attitudes and practices with those typical of anthropologists. Much of the chapter is taken up with a close critique of Burridge's writings on both missionaries and anthropologists, particularly in his classic work *Encountering Aborigines* (1973), supplemented by a contrast between the ideals described by Burridge and the behavior observed by Tonkinson of a particularly (although not uniquely) domineering fundamentalist sect

operating at Jigalong in the Western Australian desert during the 1960s. Tonkinson notes that Roman Catholic and other missions operating elsewhere in Australia more completely conform to Burridge's model as well as a general trend towards forms of missionary activities that sustain transcultural interactions and outreach rather than reactive condemnation of traditional ways and the enforcement of assimilation. In the final analysis, the "metacultural" dynamic of individuality, which Burridge places at the heart of missionary endeavors, does not seem to guarantee the movement toward a more just moral order so much as moralism. The goal of "mutual *metanoia*"—the moral transformation of both missionary and convert—rests upon the same ethical foundation as good anthropological fieldwork: a respect for other cultural traditions, an acceptance of the moral and political autonomy of the subjects of missionary or anthropological activities and a willingness to undertake self-critique.

Chapter 11, "Reaching for the Absolute" by F. G. Bailey, concludes the volume with a lively reflection on the underlying logic and tensions in anthropological studies of morality. Bailey begins by identifying a "double hermeneutic" that he suggests informs social anthropology: "anthropologists construct templates to provide access to the templates that others...construct to make their world meaningful" (Bailey, this volume). Bailey endeavors here to construct a third level hermeneutic that allows him to investigate "the prejudices, preoccupations, ideologies, philosophical underpinnings or conceptual frameworks" employed by anthropologists to gain access to the local templates of their research subjects. His witty commentary focuses specifically upon Burridge's approach to Melanesian and missionary morality. He notes that this work tends to assume an opposition between "advantage" and "moral-person" templates—that is to say, between an assumption that the actions of individuals are motivated by desires for personal advantage (willfulness) or by a desire to become absorbed within a larger moral community ("participatory values," in Burridge's terms). Bailey argues that studies of religion, politics, and morality require the balanced use of both templates, perceived as existing in a dialectical relationship. He warns against the temptation to focus on one or the other, either as an attempt to undermine the opposing template (and thus surreptitiously insert its rival) or to subsume its opposite into a higher synthesis. Such approaches amount to a "bad methodology" that distorts our understanding of local realities. The temptation to seek a transcendent synthesis (which Bailey refers to as the "totality-itch") is even worse, not only because it is logically flawed but also because it too easily slides into authoritarianism.

Burridge provides an inviting target for such criticisms not only because of his evident sympathy for missionaries—a group most anthropologists view with ambivalence at best—but perhaps even more so because he perceives humans as essentially moral beings. Burridge's elevation of moral dilemmas as the key dynamic in the human condition is unusual, especially for an anthropologist. Yet, I would insist that Tonkinson and Bailey's critiques not be read as pertaining just to this one scholar. They expose very deep and abiding ethical tensions that lie at the very heart of the discipline. Whatever one thinks of Burridge's specific arguments and sympathies, his insistence on the centrality of moral obligation in human experience ultimately places anthropologists on the same moral boat as the people they study. Tonkinson and Bailey's chapters are not just critiques; they are themselves

engagements in a dilemma that all anthropologists face concerning their own values and responsibilities towards their discipline and research subjects. Significantly, the two authors suggest contrary solutions, with Tonkinson insisting on a vigorous embrace of the moral politics of human rights and Bailey recommending a position of detachment.

The two final essays thus recapitulate the central thrust of this volume by bringing it home to anthropology itself. Human beings everywhere face difficult choices through life. Some people avoid the challenges and others embrace them, but all make choices. In so doing they often refer to moral dogmas, tempered by self-interest and the contingencies of the moment. Those dogmas provide some stability but are at the same time put at risk. Even as they are asserted they become subject to modification, innovation, and even rejection and replacement by competing moral ideologies. We are principally interested in understanding morality as a motivating force, part of the dynamic by which societies renew and change. The study of morality specifically directs our attention to the subjective dimensions of human experience, the ways that people perceive and deal with the challenges that confront them. Power and politics are clearly important. Appeals to morality often cloak a host of less noble ambitions and, perhaps even more dangerously, serve to justify actions that at a minimum do little good and far too often great harm. Little wonder, then, that anthropologists and missionaries often view each others' ethical stances with the greatest skepticism. But they are not the only ones. Other people's morality usually seems suspect in the harsh light of one's own. The appeal we make in these pages is to put aside such justified suspicions for a time in order to better appreciate the power of morality as a motivating force in human experience. Such an appreciation is not meant to replace political or other analytic frameworks but to complement and challenge them by more holistically considering the ways people experience and work through the challenges of their lives.

This page intentionally left blank

PART I
MORAL EXEMPLARS
IN VILLAGE SOCIETY

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 2

Morality, Politics and the Melanesian Big Man: On *The Melanesian Manager* and the Transformation of Political Anthropology

Joel Robbins

Introduction

The image of the big man has been one of the enduring contributions the anthropology of Melanesia has made to political anthropology at large and indeed to comparative social science more generally. Regularly understood to lie at the far end of any kind of continuum of political structure—be it evolutionary, typological etc.—the big man has succeeded in becoming a figure to conjure with for those trying to think through the range of ways power is organized in human societies. Yet for all of the angles from which big men and big men societies have been examined, and for all that the literature on them has been carefully combed, one topic that surfaced in several of the early classic pieces on big-manship has been left curiously undeveloped in the discussions that have followed. This is the topic of the relationship between morality and politics in big man societies.

Read (1959, 434) can be seen as initiating explicit discussion of the relationship between morality and politics in big men societies when he noted that big men among the Gahuku-Gama have to balance their adherence to the contradictory values of strength and equivalence and that sometimes they fail, relying too much on the efficacy of assertiveness. In recognition of this, he adds, they sometimes call themselves “bad men.” Their followers, however, seem less disturbed and save their “moral disapproval” for those who rely only on strength and completely disregard the demands of equivalence (Read 1959, 434). Sahlins (2000, 79-80) develops another side of this problem in laying out what he calls the “Melanesian contradiction.” This contradiction inheres in the way big men build up their followings by observing the demands of reciprocity but then, as their stature grows, are forced to ask for more and repay less to float their expansive designs. In the end, Sahlins writes (2000, 80) “we find leaders negating the reciprocal obligations upon which their following had been predicated.” Having reached this point, some are overthrown. But most are not, so we must assume that on this score too “moral disapproval” is not the most fundamental reaction on the part of their followers. These two important early statements are enough to indicate that the moral situation of the big man is a complex

one. The argument of this chapter is that by exploring this complexity we can again make the big man shed comparative light: this time on the general problem of the relationship between politics and morality.

Politics and morality. To put them in the same sentence is to court an at best cynical response (Kane 2001). Claims to their own morality may affect politicians' popularity, and claims about the immorality of others may provide them sticks with which to pummel their opponents, but it is hard to imagine that very many people who have given modern politics careful thought believe that moral considerations are routinely foremost in the calculations of political decision-makers. Indeed, as Bobbio (2000, 44ff) has recently reminded us quite eloquently, since the foundation of the modern state many important arguments in Western political philosophy have supported the claim that actors in the realm of politics should either be exempt from most of the moral dictates that hold in other domains and/or should be subject to a different, less stringent morality that applies only to political action (see also Haslam 2002). The justification for such a split between ethics and politics is encapsulated in the phrase "reason of state," which has long served as a switch politicians can throw to turn off the light of everyday morality when it shines too harshly upon them.

At the root of the modern version of the ethics/politics divide is, Bobbio (2000, 45) conjectures, the split between church and state which has developed in the Christian tradition. With the church as an institution and its priests and other functionaries charged with the task of delineating and promoting a universal and in some respects ideal moral order, political institutions are left with the job of doing whatever they can to "guarantee temporal order in human relations." A division of labor is thus institutionalized in which ethics and politics belong to different sectors. Despite the frustrations and disappointments this division has sometimes caused those who approach it from either sector, it has proven quite a stable feature of modern life.

Against the background of this tradition of separation of the moral and the political, the case of the big man stands out as distinctive. To demonstrate this, I want to focus on a third classic article on big-manship, Burridge's (1975) *The Melanesian Manager*.¹ Burridge's argument shows us two things relevant to our topic. First, many of our ideas about Melanesian big men are at least colored and maybe severely misshapen by the fact that our assumptions about the relations between ethics and politics draw on the way modern thought relegates them to separate realms. Second, an examination of big-manship that does not take this split for granted can teach us important things about what political life is like when the ethics/politics split is not in force, and by doing so can point to the kinds of transformations that had to have

1 Burridge uses the term "Melanesian manager" to refer to what others call "big men." His article has been widely influential, but his usage never caught on. Hence I will stay with the term "big man" here. This is an appropriate place to note that Burridge's work has had a powerful influence on me from the outset of my work in Melanesia and played an important role in directing me to this area of study. Since I primarily study religion, his work on cargo cults and millenarianism more generally are perhaps more obviously important to my way of thinking about things (1960; 1969a), but "The Melanesian Manager" is a work I have returned to again and again and I think it is fair to say that it encapsulates many of Burridge's finest insights into the nature of Melanesian social process.

occurred to put that split in place. Let me expand on both of these points briefly before turning to ethnographic considerations.

Part of the force of Burridge's argument in *The Melanesian Manager* follows from how much it differs from other influential accounts of big-manship. For I think it is fair to say that most of those who have discussed big men have represented them as master politicians, entrepreneurial to a fault and possessed of a fine sense of the demands of *realpolitik*—even the foundational works I discussed at the outset of this chapter to some extent foster this kind of image. To be sure, the goals big men sought to maximize (debts, relationships and prestige) and the ways they went about maximizing them (giving gifts, arranging major exchanges, making speeches etc.) were culturally quite specific and thus analysts' efforts to suss out the particular logics of leadership in various cases led them to create a rich body of literature on big-manship that is very sensitive to cultural nuance and does not appear on its face to be compromised by modern biases. But, I would argue, the bias introduced by the ethics/politics split is tricky precisely because it does not show up in what is in the literature, but rather in the unstated assumption throughout the literature that showing how big men are in local terms shrewd practical politicians is all one must do to account for the roles they play in their societies. It is this assumption that Burridge calls into question in his article.

Indeed, Burridge (1975, 86) sets out his intention to move beyond the normal science of big-manship right at the start of the article, when he declares that a big man is "not simply a local entrepreneur..." but is also "a symbol as well." Burridge never explicitly answers the question of whom a big man is a symbol for (i.e. the anthropologist or others in his own society), but it is clear in the logic of his argument that he means that the big man is a symbol for others in his society to ponder. And when they do ponder him, what they see is "one who both embodies and transcends the inherent and recurrent conflicts...to which his community is subject, and who reveals to others the kinds of moral conflict in which they are involved" (Burridge 1975, 87). Or, as Burridge (1979, 141) puts it in *Someone, No One*, the big man reveals to those in his society "the dilemmas of morality which each must resolve for himself." The big man, in this account, is like a magnifying mirror in which others see their own moral predicaments enlarged, clarified and in various ways dealt with. A large part of the big man's appeal, in this argument, is the service he provides as a moral exemplar, someone who is good for ordinary people to think when they ponder how to handle the moral conflicts they face in their own lives. Simply by making this point, Burridge stakes out a new terrain in the study of Melanesian leadership and raises far more powerfully than I have been able to here the question of the extent to which the modern split between ethics and politics has left its mark on the big man literature.

But Burridge does more than this, for he also shows us that both politics and morality look very different in societies where they are brought into relation with one another than they do in those in which they are normatively assigned to separate realms. Consider in this regard the fact that in arguing that big men are moral symbols, even in some sense exemplars, Burridge does *not* argue that they function as such by virtue of being very good. In fact, as Burridge tells us and as I will exemplify ethnographically below, often big men only solve the moral dilemmas they confront

by standing apart from the moral order and violating at least some of its tenets (1975, 96), or by acting “non-reciprocally” in order to initiate things (1975, 102). In this sense, they resolve dilemmas not by acting in unambiguously moral ways, but by making the hard choices between imperfect ethical alternatives that most prefer to avoid; it is in making these choices, and thus pushing social life forward, that they become exemplary for their fellows. That is to say, their appeal is grounded not in their ability to somehow work around the kinds of contradictions Read and Sahlins discuss, but in their skill at living fully in the teeth of them.

What is crucial in this for my larger argument is that big men are moral leaders not in spite of their failure to act as moral saints but precisely by virtue of that failure. Indeed, no one aims to apply the criterion of sainthood to them, and perhaps it is fair to say that the criterion does not even exist in the Melanesian context. Certainly it is true that there is no part written for the saint in the famous Melanesian cast of characters BurrIDGE (1975, 94-95) lays out in *The Melanesian Manager*—the manager, the ordinary man, the sorcerer and the rubbish-man. This is so, I would suggest, because the Western model of sainthood as it is now understood depends upon the ethics/politics split for its sense—only when one can be a moral specialist and count on others to handle politics is there room to realize transcendental values within the world in an enduring way. Understood in these terms, the modern model of the moral exemplar as someone who behaves ethically at all times, even under pressure, is probably too colored by the ethics/politics split to be useful where that split does not hold. Once we jettison it, we can begin to see that other kinds of moral exemplars are possible. As BurrIDGE shows us, the Melanesian big man is an example of one of these other kinds.

There is one other aspect of BurrIDGE’s article that was in its time relatively unique and that foreshadowed future developments. In it, he talks about Melanesians in general rather than making an argument about a particular Melanesian culture. I think this is an important move in that by making it he forced his readers to reckon with the fact that his intent was theoretical. Around the same time, Wagner (1981) was experimenting with a similar style of argument, and Sahlins (2000) had earlier had recourse to it in his famous big man article. Later, Gregory (1982) and M. Strathern (1988) would also pick it up to quite influential effect. But BurrIDGE in this article was, as far as I know, one of its first modern exponents. I think there is an important place for this kind of argument, but in a science founded on the value of cultural differences it is always bound to be controversial. Therefore, in the body of this chapter I want to particularize BurrIDGE’s argument and show how precisely it points to key features of the social life of a specific group, the Urapmin, and helps us understand certain puzzling facts about leadership in their community. After laying out the details of BurrIDGE’s argument through the Urapmin case, I will return in conclusion to some of the larger theoretical points of this introduction.

The Puzzle of Leadership Among the Urapmin

The Urapmin, one of the Min or Mountain Ok societies, are a group of approximately 390 people living in the West Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. They are

swidden horticulturists who raise few pigs. Until their conversion to a charismatic form of Christianity in the late 1970s, much of their public social life focused on the elaborate men's initiation rituals for which the Min groups are most famous. They did not in the past and do not now engage in major pig exchange ceremonies or other rituals of competitive giving, and while they do give bridewealth at marriage, the ideal marriage pattern is one of delayed restricted exchange that returns at the second marriage roughly what was given at the first. Furthermore, they reckon descent cognatically and enduring social groups *per se* do not exist, as Jorgensen (1981b) has shown is also the case for the neighboring Telefomin.

On the basis of this sketch, one would not expect Urapmin society to feature powerful big men. Instead, it looks as if it should display the pattern prevalent in what have come to be called great man societies, where leadership functions are parceled out among various types of leaders and no single type of leader is able to claim overall paramouncy (Godelier 1986; Godelier and Strathern 1991). Certainly other Mountain Ok groups have been convincingly described in terms of the great man model (Jorgensen 1991). Yet the Urapmin do have several leaders, called *kamokim* (sing. *kamok*) or, in Tok Pisin, *bikman*, who people regard as powerful in all public domains and universally recognize as the most influential members of Urapmin society. The reason why this should be so despite the evident lack of the social structural correlates that usually accompany such political structures constitutes the puzzle of leadership among the Urapmin.

The importance of these big men to the Urapmin was impossible to miss during my fieldwork. From my first arrival, everyone I spoke to—old or young, politically ambitious or retiring—would ask me if I had met the four big men in the community. Younger people and people in their forties would express to me their admiration for these men, and would insist on almost any topic I asked them about that the big men would be more qualified to answer my questions than they were. Even among themselves, people talked about big men all the time, and their conversations about local life were frequently given over to discussing what big men had done or said. Once I had lived in Urapmin for awhile, I also came to realize that people became slightly unsettled when the big man they lived near traveled or stayed away in the bush—tensions rose and everyone felt more vulnerable when their local big man was not in his village.

Big men were also crucial to the conduct of many aspects of social life (Robbins 2003a). It is, for example, big men who organize people into villages and villages are very much identified with the big men who created them. Big men also take the lead in helping people assemble the shell money necessary for bridewealth payments (Robbins 1999). They are major speakers at court cases and often in effect represent their followers in these and other agonistic settings. They also organize many of the ad hoc work groups that carry out large-scale projects in Urapmin (see below). What all of this makes clear is that people allow big men to have a major influence on the flow of Urapmin social life, and this despite the fact that they occupy their statuses solely on the basis of achievement and are responsible for no major public exchanges. Big men have this influence well beyond any practical reasons people might have for following them (see below), and it was the surplus mental and emotional investment people made in these leaders, along with the generalized authority accorded to them,

that forced me to think of them as big men rather than as great men or some other kind of more specialized leader.

My argument here is that a crucial part of the big man's importance in Urapmin is his status as a moral exemplar or symbol in Burridge's sense. It is because those who are "ordinary people," to adopt Burridge's term, feel a keen need to have such exemplars around that big-manship in Urapmin flourishes as an institution, despite the fact that by any kind of economic or political logic it seems that it should be unnecessary. But then this begs the question of why ordinary people feel this need, so this is the question that really requires answering here.

The answer to the question of why big men who serve as moral exemplars are important to the Urapmin lies in the relationship that holds between the Urapmin moral system and their social system. As I mentioned before, the Urapmin social system is characterized by cognatic descent and a lack of stable groups. People are thus given a great deal of choice in matters of whom to live with, whom to work with, and whom to have other kinds of social relations with. Furthermore, having made these choices people are always given the choice of changing their minds. Urapmin villages are thus somewhat unstable, and at minimum their membership tends to shift when they move, as they do every ten years or so. And even when a village remains stable, people sometimes live in more than one village at the same time. Gardening and hunting groups change even more regularly than villages, with patterns shifting from garden to garden or hunting trip to hunting trip. In matters of marriage, it is understood that a woman should choose whom she wants to marry and that no one has a right to influence her choice (marriages are usually only seen to fit the pattern of delayed restricted exchange after a good deal of skilled interpretive work on the part of the parties involved). At all levels, then, Urapmin social life expects people to be making choices.

Given this very fluid situation, it is not surprising that the Urapmin do not talk about their social structure as the outcome of the operation of a set of rules enjoining particular kinds of interaction between people in particular statues. They almost never speak of rules of behavior framed in terms of relations of kinship and affinity. To be sure, there are rules of what we might call etiquette framed this way, so that, for example, traditionally one never touched one's mother-in-law. But there were no rules of the type that would specify that one must live with one's brother or garden with one's wife's family or do any important activity with someone on the basis of the kin or affinal relationship you had with them. Urapmin people simply do not explain their own or others' social behavior by speaking of these sorts of rules.

How then do they account for people's social behavior and describe the social structure it produces? They account for people's behavior by saying that people do "what they will" (*ilimi san*) and describe their social structure by saying that it is the outcome of people doing what they will. It is because people want to that they live in particular villages, garden and hunt with particular people, and make relations of other kinds with various other people. Ordinary women act on the basis of their wills to make marriages; ordinary men use their wills to keep their married sons living in their houses; ordinary women use their wills to keep their daughters-in-law focused on their new families; and all ordinary people above the age of seventeen or so use their wills to put together gardening groups, hunting groups, sports teams, etc. In

the absence of rules that would form these groups out of people occupying specific statuses, it is only when people will them into existence that they come to exist. Thus, to put the Urapmin view of these matters in Burridge's terms, the Urapmin see human "self-willedness" as the engine of their social life.

The fact that the Urapmin see the will as socially creative does not, however, mean that they regard its exercise as morally easy. For, to take up another classic theme in Burridge's work, the Urapmin also highly value individual autonomy and it is understood that it is not good for people to "push" others to do their will. Pushing people can lead not only to anger, but also to physical sickness. Putting one's will into action thus becomes a tricky business in which straightforward bullying is rare and people work as much as possible through persuasion to recruit people to their projects. Persuasion in Urapmin, as in many societies where autonomy is highly valued, generally rests on the promise of some kind of reciprocity: "if you join me in this I will give to you various things" or "you will join with others involved in my project in a community of people who will routinely treat each other in reciprocal ways." For most people, it is the prospect of entering into stable relations of roughly equivalent give and take that leads them to turn their own wills toward that of another person.

I can sum up my account of the Urapmin social system by saying that it is characterized by a thoroughgoing emphasis on choice. This is also, I have argued, how the Urapmin see it. If we take the realm of choice to be the realm to which morality applies (a complex point I will assume as taken here, rather than argue for directly-see Laidlaw 2002; Robbins 2004), then it should not come as a surprise to learn that the Urapmin feel themselves to be making serious moral choices with some frequency. Almost never possessed of a structural alibi for what they do, Urapmin see themselves as always morally accountable for the courses of action their wills lead them to take. Their moral system is thus highly elaborated, and a description of it lays the groundwork for our understanding of the role of big men as moral exemplars.

As I noted above, it is the promise of forming stable relations of reciprocity that bends most people's wills in the direction of social intercourse. Urapmin morality recognizes this and its fundamental tenet is the one that enjoins people to treat others reciprocally in most relationships. This injunction is enshrined in what the Urapmin call "the law" (*awem*). The law takes many forms, including a system of food taboos (now largely disregarded) and a Decalogue-like set of prohibitions against grossly anti-social behavior such as murder or theft within the Urapmin community. But in everyday life the most important form of the law is the one it takes as a general rule that one should act reciprocally in most relationships, returning rough equivalents for things one is given.

Just as the Urapmin recognize that it can be hard to exercise the will, they also know that it can be hard to follow the law of reciprocal treatment. As the will is always looking to form new relationships or transform old ones into more intense forms, there is always the temptation to turn one's attention from standing relationships and treat those whom one relates to in them in less than equivalent ways. As the Urapmin see it then, one often has to exercise Burridge's "self-restraint" in order to follow the

law of reciprocal treatment. Moral people are in the first instance those who are able to restrain themselves in this way when necessary.

As I have presented it to this point, Urapmin morality may look like one that sets the law directly against the will, but that is not quite the case. It is more accurate to say that it enjoins people to balance willfulness and lawfulness in socially productive ways. Putting it in very broad terms, Urapmin morality insists that one use the will to create new relations (build villages, form work and hunting groups, start marriages, begin exchange partnerships, etc.) but then follow the law within those relations one has already created. That is to say, Urapmin morality recognizes that in the absence of a set of social structural rules that would put a society together there would not be any social life without peoples' willful efforts to form relationships—and it brands those who have no will at all as “rubbish men” (*rabis man* in Tok Pisin or *tanum mafuk* in Urapmin, lit. “bad man”). At the same time, however, it also recognizes that if the law is not followed in relationships that have already been made, they will fall apart in frustration and anger. The fact that Urapmin morality has room for both willfulness and lawfulness fits it well to the fluid and structurally underdetermined realities of Urapmin social life. It also makes it a system of ideals that works very well in the abstract. In real life, however, it becomes tricky to operate.

Urapmin morality is difficult to put into practice with perfect success for two reasons. The first is that to establish new relations or transform old ones people sometimes have to act willfully and without any respect for the law of reciprocity. Such purely willful actions are relatively rare, but when they occur they often breed frustration and anger both in those whom the willful person wants to bring into a new or new kind of relationship and in those with whom the willful person already has relationships that he/she has ignored in turning his/her attention toward the new relationship. The second reason it can be difficult to act morally in Urapmin is what I call the paradox of lawfulness. This paradox follows from the fact that a lawful act toward one person with whom one is in relationship is often seen by others as a willful turning away from them. If a young couple garden with the husband's parents for several weeks, the wife's parents are likely to charge them with willful disregard of her family. If I share a pandanus feast with those with whom I garden, those with whom I hunt are likely to feel slighted. Every lawful turning toward one person registers with others as a willful turning away from themselves. Hence most of the time, even when they are not initiating new relationships, people find that from someone or others' point of view they are not doing a good job of balancing law and will. No wonder frustration and anger, along with the sickness, poor hunting and gardening they are thought “mystically” to cause, seem to people to be ever-present. Talk of moral failure is always in the air. Certainly one never meets a Urapmin person who exudes the moral self-confidence that so many moderns, with the image of sainthood before them, hope it might be possible to achieve.

All Urapmin adults face the difficulty of operating morally in the face of the problems their social life presents them with, for everyone has to create and maintain relations of reciprocal exchange. For “ordinary people” the easiest way to face these problems is to limit the number of relations they try to establish and maintain. Some who are weary of routine moral failure opt for very strict limitation and instead of living in a village live alone with their families. Many others choose something

similar, living in a village but in practice spending almost all of their time living with their families in their garden houses either alone or with at most one other family. Most people opt for a bit more than this, living in a village and forming hunting and gardening groups with those from their village and with close affines—but this is where they stop. For them, the dilemmas of Urapmin morality are not fully resolved, but the tensions they create are kept at a manageable level by virtue of their being worked out in a relatively small social field.

It is against this strategy of social limitation that big men stand out. They constantly push to form new relations and to make the ones they already have more intense. They can do so because they are willing to face the dilemmas of Urapmin morality that most prefer to avoid. They are willing to push people to accede to their wishes, and in doing so they are willing to express their own anger. They are also willing to serve as the targets of the anger of others—both those they push into new or extended relations and those of their followers that feel they have been treated non-reciprocally when their big man's attention has been turned toward creating new relationships. They are willing, in a word, to risk moral failure and condemnation in their drive to expand their social worlds.

All of this is not to say the big men ignore the moral code altogether. They work hard to cast their demands on people not as willful importuning, but rather as either an offer of opportunities to enter into an expanded sphere of reciprocal exchange (“come live in my village, it will be a large one and we will share lots of meat”) or a demand to act lawfully by recognizing ways that one is already related to the big man (“your father and my father worked together, so it is only right that we cooperate as well”). In fact, big men honor the moral code rhetorically most of the time. But everyone knows that they push harder than is quite right by that code's lights, and that to a man they are “angry men” (*aget atul tanum*) who, when the going gets at all rough, will express themselves in a morally-questionable, violent tone most people avoid. Thus in Burridge's terms they regularly “transcend” the moral order—acting in ways it does not quite allow.

One would imagine that if big men violate the moral order in transcending it they would be condemned by ordinary people. Often this is in fact the case, as is evidenced by the anger they regularly face and the frustration people express about them. But they are also embraced, depended upon and loved. Why? Burridge (1975, 96) answers this question when he notes that big men set themselves “aside or apart from the moral order whilst continuing to participate in the social order.” The real test of a big man is that his moral transgressions be socially productive. They need to produce those contexts—such as villages, hunting and gardening groups, exchange rituals such as marriage and death exchanges etc.—in which ordinary people can create and maintain relations of reciprocal equivalence. It is the successful creation of such contexts that demonstrates that their transcendence of the moral order has on a higher level served not just their own wills but also the law.

Summarizing the argument to this point, we can say that big men are morally important to people in two ways. Although not wholly good, they attest to the fact that the contradictions in the moral code that follow from its twin embrace of law and will can be faced productively. Women who make marriages, men and women who hold together households, anyone who puts a gardening group or sports

team together, and everybody who is alive to the extent that they come up against the paradox of lawfulness has to reckon from time to time with the same kind of treacherous moral terrain the big men are always traversing. People learn to manage their own short forays onto that terrain by watching how the big men pick their way through it. In this sense the big men are, as Burridge says, “exemplars”—models to be emulated.

They are also morally important to people in another way: by transcending the moral code in the service of society, they allow others to live much more of their lives than they otherwise could safely within the bounds of what Urapmin morality requires. Because big men do the heavy social lifting of willfully creating villages and bringing other kinds of groups together, and (though I have not dwelled on this) of defending angrily the claims of their followers to gardening, hunting and village land, others do not have to do so. Ordinary people can practice the moral strategy of social limitation and still live a viable social life because their big men are willing to go beyond Urapmin morality in bringing a social world into being around them. In this sense, they are, as Burridge says, “symbols”—that which allows people to inhabit a meaningful world they can understand and live with.²

Before closing this ethnographic section, it is probably worth pausing to consider an obvious alternative way to account for the importance of Urapmin big men—one that is more in keeping with traditional accounts in that it refers to the practical advantages big men confer on their followers and does not explain their political status by referring to their moral standing. I have already noted that big men create villages and other contexts of social interaction. Surely there must be room in the Urapmin case for the argument that people follow big men because big men get practical things done.

At first glance such a case does indeed seem possible. I once asked a man who was, for reasons I will not go into here, feeling particularly pushed around by a big man why people followed big men at all. “If we didn’t,” he answered, “how would we get our houses roofed and our pig fences built?” The brevity of his list was not rhetorical. Urapmin families that consist of at least one adult man and woman can in principle do almost everything they need to do on their own. They can produce garden food, hunt, and, as noted earlier, they can live alone. Many families spend a good part of their time in just such an inward-focused state living in their garden houses, and the few families who live alone spend even more. But for purely material reasons, a family cannot roof its own house (because all of the leaves need to be collected and put up quickly enough so that the smoke from the hearth can cure them before they rot) or build its own pig fence (it simply requires too much labor to be

2 This paragraph is central to Bailey’s ingenious argument in this volume that the Urapmin, because they sometimes tolerate bad acts when they have good consequences, hold to something like a notion of reason of state. Yet the immediately preceding paragraph complicates this interpretation, for it shows that what Urapmin appreciate in their big men is that the big men face *the same* kinds of moral problems everyone faces and must respond to them from within the same moral system. There is no separate morality that applies to big men when they act in political contexts, and what is admired is their skill in working with the one morality that applies to everyone.

feasible). Big men organize exchanges of labor among families so that these tasks can be completed, and, as the man I was talking to noted, in doing so they perform a necessary practical function.³

So big men carry out some practical tasks that no one else can accomplish. Is this enough to root their status in the practical demands of Urapmin social life, rather than in the moral ones? A closer look at the matter indicates that it is not. In fact, it is enough to consider why ordinary people cannot organize labor parties to realize that in fact we have not left the realm of morality at all. Ordinary people cannot organize labor parties because doing so requires a very strong display of will. One has to override the wills of numerous individuals to get them to show up for these tasks. It takes a willingness to push, to persuade, and to get angry to bring these things off. Ordinary people do not like to do these things because they are uncomfortable with the immorality they involve. Big men, as we know, do not find the need to go beyond what the moral system strictly allows to be an impediment to action. Thus, in these cases, as in all of the others we have considered (e.g. putting together villages) big men can be practically effective because they can stand outside the moral system when that is what the situation requires. The cases of house-roofing and pig-fence building stand out for people because they are the ones that people always need help with if they are to survive. They can, if they have to, do without villages and the other accouterments of social life, but they need the help of work groups focused on these two projects to make it at all. But in organizing labor for these tasks, the big men draw on the same willingness to work creatively beyond the terms of the moral system as they do in all of their important projects. In all cases, it is their unique relationship to that moral system that grounds their ability to lead.

Conclusion

I hope at this point to have established two key claims. First, that Melanesian big men, as exemplified by the Urapmin *kamokim*, hold their positions at least in part by virtue of their moral standing. Second, that by doing so these big men exemplify a cultural configuration of morality and politics that is different from the modern one that distributes them to different domains and does not expect them to enter into a synthetic relationship. Perhaps the most concrete proof of this difference is the fact that people hold big men to be moral exemplars while also recognizing that they are at best morally adventurous and more generally somewhat immoral. Because the political-ethical configuration of their culture welcomes big men's brinkmanship as long as it is socially productive, that brinkmanship enhances rather than diminishes their status. In the modern configuration, such brinkmanship is held to be irrelevant

3 If I were going to expand this very short list of the big man's practical functions at all, I would also note that they help young men collect shell money from outside the community for bridewealth payments (Robbins 1999). Big men are better at this than ordinary men, and people appreciate their help in it, but my informant probably left it off the list because, if need be, most families could at least make an attempt to do this on their own, whereas in the cases of house-roofing and pig-fence building no one can even imagine carrying it off alone.

politically but would render a leader someone to avoid as a “role model.”⁴ It is not, then, incumbent on modern leaders to find novel solutions to moral dilemmas that all of their followers face (cf. Burrridge 1979, 14). Burrridge’s (1979) *Someone, No One* is a book that incorporates some of the ideas first laid out in *The Melanesian Manager*. It is a complex book, but at least one way in which it can be read is as an account of how you get from the Melanesian world and others like it to our own. The story it tells is one of how Christianity generalized the individuality formerly available or imposed only on those in specific social statuses so that it became an aspect or goal of every persons’ life. Taking a clue from the grand themes of this work and applying them in altered form to the political preoccupations that have been my focus here, I want to close by broadly sketching one possible account of how worlds in which politics and ethics are linked become ones in which they are not.

In the introduction, I noted that Bobbio (2000) lays the split between ethics and politics at the feet of the Christian separation between church and state. I take his account to be true as far as it goes. But it leaves open the question of why the Christian tradition generated such a split. One could answer this question in socio-historical terms, of course, but since I am interested in a genealogy of cultural ideas here I am going to focus instead on the cultural aspects of Christianity that allowed such a split to take place when it became socially-historically warranted.

Borrowing my terms from the Melanesianist anthropologists de Coppet and Iteanu (1995, 1-2), both students of Dumont (whom Burrridge recognizes as a major influence on his argument in *Someone, No One*—1979, x), I would argue that at the heart of Christianity as a culture is a split between cosmos and society. For de Coppet and Iteanu what this means is that something—originally God, but now for many the individual—is culturally regarded as more valuable than society. Traditionally in Melanesia, they argue, this was not the case; cosmos and society were linked and society itself was most highly valued.

De Coppet and Iteanu’s argument is closely related to those of Jaspers (1953), Eisenstadt (1982) and others who have developed the notion of axial age civilizations; the dynamics of religious development that axial age theorists lay out explains how it is that cosmos and society can be split from one another. In the religions that give axial age civilizations their shape, the argument goes, a distinction is made between this imperfect world and a morally ideal world that exists elsewhere. This distinction makes it possible to criticize this world from the vantage point of an imaginary

4 I quite obviously do not mean that modern people do not speculate on the moral qualities of their leaders as displayed in the decisions they make about their private affairs, only that they do not hold their private moral choices or the moral aspects of their political decision making to be decisive indicators of their political stature. Thus, just to take cases readily at hand, despite a great deal of talk about Clinton’s sexual morality and his dishonesty in talking about it, his approval rating remained high and those who wanted to impeach him for his moral behavior were those who already opposed him on strictly political grounds. One can comment similarly on how Americans are dealing with the quite narrowly defined notions of self- and class-interest that appear to lie at the heart of Bush’s military and economic policies. People do worry over how those policies may affect the country and their own lives, but they seem to have little interest in speculating about the moral value of running the country on such a basis.

perfect one. It also plants the seed of suspicion that moral perfection simply cannot be realized in this world: those who seek it must either withdraw from this world or bide their time until the other one comes. In Christianity, I would argue, it is these kinds of ideas that first jarred society and cosmos apart. They also made the split between church (cosmos) and state (society) reasonable both at the time of Christianity's origins (where Jesus' injunction to "render unto Caesar" represented the idea's first appearance) and at the birth of the modern political order out of the crucible of the post-reformation wars of religion (Koselleck 1988; Toulmin 1992). In doing so, they provided the foundation for the separation of politics and morality with which the West currently lives.

In *Someone, No One*, Burridge both recognizes that the world of generalized individuality that Christianity established has its share of problems and hopes that what he sees as the core of the Christian message can still be used to create a better world founded in love. My own conclusion is far more circumscribed and relates only to the progress of anthropology as a social science. From that point of view, an attachment to a modern picture of politics and political motivation—one that sees it everywhere as informed not by morality but by self-interest and locally defined "reasons of state"—has hampered the discipline's ability to learn about other kinds of political worlds. Ever since the substantivist movement, it has been common knowledge among anthropologists who study economics that it is only in the modern world that the economy has become "disembedded" from other social domains and able to work out a rationality all its own. The moral for anthropologists is that to attribute market logic to people who do not live with a disembedded economy is to misunderstand them. I would suggest that we need to make a similar kind of argument about politics—though there has never been a substantivist political anthropology that could make this claim (Robbins 2003b). Were one to start a substantivist movement in political anthropology, one could do no better than to base it on Burridge's work—for he has provided one of the most theoretically astute pictures we have of the entanglements of politics with morality and other aspects of life in cultures where cosmos and society, and morality and politics, remain in relation to one another and together ground a kind of politics that cannot without cynicism be imagined in the West.

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 3

When is it Moral to be a Sorcerer?¹

Doug Dalton

The title of my chapter—“When is it moral to be a sorcerer?”—is meant to be counter-intuitive. My intention is to point to a moral paradox or dilemma which I believe goes well beyond sorcery to the heart of ethical theory and practice. There is a simple and relatively obvious utilitarian sociological solution to the conundrum of the moral sorcerer: the sorcerer is moral whenever he works to eliminate evil for the greater good of the community. However I resist solutions that seem to resolve or dissolve the moral paradox of the sorcerer in order to explore the dilemma the figure embodies in greater depth than usual. By doing so, I seek to confront a profound irresolvable puzzle that confounds human moral action in general.

The moral enigmas that accompany sorcery beliefs and practices have been probed brilliantly by Kenelm Burridge and I draw much inspiration and employ several key arguments from his writings. Like Burridge I see sorcery as concerning the problem of evil. This chapter is based on an account of sorcery and related cultural ideas and practices of Rawa speaking people, who reside in Madang Province on the southern slopes of the Finisterre Mountains of northeast Papua New Guinea, up and across the Ramu River from the Tangu people studied by Burridge. In this chapter I refer principally to these two cultures, which share patterns with many other Melanesian societies.

I begin by considering the Christian-influenced views of contemporary Rawa, which picture the sorcerer as an essentially evil character whose demeanor contrasts with that ideally exemplified by moral leaders. However, an examination of actual individuals who exhibit some of these traits suggests a much greater degree of ethical complexity. A more systematic discussion of leaders and sorcerers in the next section reveals a far more ambiguous relationship in which one figure often merges into the other. But whereas a leader at different historical junctures may use sorcery to reinforce a given moral order, the sorcerer challenges it by making visible underlying tensions and opening or forcing opportunities for moral review and change. Indeed, a brief review of how sorcery practices and the position of the sorcerer in Rawa society have shifted in relation to larger historical forces suggests that the sorcerer might usefully be seen as a “thermometer” of his moral time and

1 This chapter benefited greatly from the discussion of the panelists at the ASAO session “Morality and Modernity in Melanesia” organized by John Barker and by John Barker’s comments and great editorial help. Any mistakes or misinterpretations of Burridge’s work, however, are entirely my own. I gratefully acknowledge the funding provided by the National Science Foundation and the help of all those who contributed to my fieldwork.

circumstances. Considered from his own perspective, the sorcerer is manifestly moral, albeit in a way that reflects an emotivist or intuitive ethics which contrasts sharply with the normative and relativist ethical theories that dominate Western thought. In my conclusion, I examine Rawa views of Europeans in parallel with Burridge and Kierkegaard's critiques of the modern condition to suggest that the moral predicament represented by sorcery in "traditional" society is equally foundational to "modernity," and that "emotivist" and Rawa views provide a way out of, if not exactly a resolution to, this predicament.

The "Evil" Sorcerer

The Rawa word for sorcery is the verb *yomburi*, which translates into Neo-Melanesian as *bagarap* ("messed up"). There is no Rawa word for the sorcerer himself. They may refer to a sorcerer as an "enemy person" (*mundi oni*) or "thief" (*yakakamboro*) but these days more often use the borrowed term *sanguma*. Villagers insist that they eradicated their indigenous tradition of sorcery in the 1930s, but that some individuals, including some local leaders, are thought to have obtained magic from elsewhere to "*bagarap* a person." Sorcery for Rawa speakers is, therefore, not so much a thing or person as it is a process and, moreover, an historical process. Sorcery may also be spoken about in other ways, for any illness or death may entail sorcery. To simply say that one is sick or dead (the two may be expressed by the same term) often implies sorcery, and illness (*sai*) may be designated as a thing which can be given (*no*). Since sorcerers also kill, to simply say that someone killed someone else can also mean sorcery.

Sorcery as Rawa speak of it today grades into other forms of mystical violence. Mystical violence, for instance, is virtually instituted in the manner in which Rawa speakers construe in-law relations. Inherent conflicts of interest over the control of the couple and their children engender inadvertent anger between in-laws which can provoke mystical violence similar to sorcery. This mystical process is imagined to work thus: the enormous heat of the physical emotional state of anger escapes its containing embodiment in the physical body and is then able to breach and destroy the soma of whoever effectuated it. This destruction of the soma thereby causes the loss of the animating life-force that it incarnates, much as the sun threatens to desiccate the life-giving spirit of young infants, who are therefore generally kept covered or indoors. A husband who gains his wife and children for his own household should therefore take great care to mollify his wife's parents and thus prevent their anger from afflicting his children.

Villagers may carry out similar forms of mystical violence with greater intent by going to their ancestors' graves and invoking them to curse an adversary. While this may be done to anyone it seems to be most effective against those with whom one is closest and in the cases of which I am aware they involved members of a single household, typically in-laws and spouses. In a cultural process recognized by classical British structural-functional theorists, when illness inflicts such households diviners are called in or members themselves voluntarily confess to one another, mutual blessings are exchanged, destructive physical states and emotions are

ameliorated, tensions resolved and reciprocal equivalencies and harmony restored, often with the help of Christian evangelists.

Unhappiness and rancor within households and among kin are also often instead directed outward against others suspected of harboring ill will, of having ungenerously taken from the household or of having foreign magical or mystical skill. Any illness or death may be accompanied by attempts to divine the identity of a sorcerer. Today, talk of sorcery is often quashed by Christian rhetoric before it develops very far, but sometimes accusations do reach public expression, fomenting a great deal of opposition and, on occasion, leading to public meetings where differences and suspicions get aired and, hopefully, resolved. The talk reveals certain assumptions about the nature of sorcerers and sorcery itself.

The Rawa sorcerer, like that of the Tangu and others, is in many ways the epitome of an evil character whose imagined personality contrasts with that of the local leader or “person with a name” (*oni owo-yi*, literally “person name-her-his” or “person of renown”). Both women and men may be leaders or, to use Burrige’s terminology, “managers.” However sorcerers are always men: no woman has ever been thought to have the capacity to express the extreme form of anger that sorcerers embody. The typical sorcerer is imagined to be an unhappy non-conformist—as Burrige says, “broody and surly” (Burrige 1960, 59). The person with a name, though not a conformist, is “someone who makes the things happen” to which communities conform and so is typically inspiring, optimistic and upbeat. The sorcerer is pictured as a sullen and morose figure, unlikely to join in the happenings orchestrated by the local leader or manager, but more apt to try to take over and subvert them.

Rawa speak of the typical sorcerer as someone unconstrained by social mores and unobliged in a community of relations based on mutual indebtedness and obligation. Unlike local leaders, sorcerers pursue their own desires for power in a nefarious manner which does not require them to provide for others. They are often people who have suffered misfortune in their lives, but rather than being crushed by it they are power seekers, defiant and ill-willed and able to employ magical means to harm others and get their own way. However, their personal selfish ends can be traps which take them ever further from their fellow Rawa, ending in the ruination of others, and also ultimately destruction of themselves.²

Sorcerers are also ungenerous and unsupportive of others in material exchange. As with Tangu, sorcerers deny “equivalence” with their fellows. Normal cultural moral constraints don’t apply to them. When not engaged in magical activities (believed to be undermined by sexual intercourse), sorcerers are also thought to be adulterers and men known to be adulterers are more likely to be suspected of sorcery than others. To oversimplify, leaders and managers can be thought of as socially constructive, and sorcerers as socially destructive (cf. Robbins, this volume).³

2 Stephen uses this fateful life course as a criteria to distinguish “witchcraft” from “sorcery,” however, like the Tangu sorcerer, the Rawa sorcerer can have many other fates and cannot be easily parsed in this way (Stephen 1987c:288).

3 This distinction parallels Stephen’s differentiation of sorcerers and witches in the Melanesian context; however I try to break it down in the following sections of the chapter (Stephen 1987c).

In addition sorcerers are also men “without shame” (*oyimo kini*), unaffected by public opinion and community conviction. This is often said of someone who has failed to reciprocate adequately or against the members of a group whose marital customs vary from those doing the accusing. The headman of the village in which I lived in the early 1980s, for instance, used this phrase to describe people who engage in sister exchange rather than pay bridewealth. “Without shame” is also attributed to so-called “rubbish men.” Whereas the quintessential rubbish man in the village where I resided was woefully inept as the result of being so plaintive, the men who were suspected to be sorcerers were perceived as umbrageous and antipathetic.

Two men in my home village fit this description. They were close associates and distant in-laws whose village residences were adjacent to one other, as the homes of affines often are. One of them was quite asocial and morose and spent most of his time away from the village in his bush house or with relatives in urban areas. He once spent several months attending a sick relative in the hospital in the provincial capital and afterwards was quite sullen and seemed to bear grudges against other villagers who had provided him and his family little support. The other man was rather sociable and active as a song leader but was also known for his selfishness and for engaging in adulterous pursuits. The former man never participated in church activities and the latter man only rarely. Both were overtly critical of other villagers in conversation and inclined to spread malicious gossip, especially the more socially active man. Neither, as far as I know, ever pursued sorcery practices, but they were not reluctant to publicly attribute deaths in the village to concealed ill-will and sorcery.

These two men’s dispositions to see nefarious motives and sorcery everywhere and to speak their minds led others to suspect them of engaging in sorcery activities themselves. On one occasion, a group of kin from a village a couple hours walk away, who had suffered a series of illnesses, accused the two men at a public meeting of practicing sorcery against them. They met the accusations with denial, humor and derision, especially the more outgoing of the two. No one in their own village took the charges very seriously, who found their cynicism easier to tolerate given the popularity of the one man as a singer and the recognition that the other looked after his family tolerably well. On top of this, villagers claimed to have gotten rid of their own sorcerers many years ago when the village had been formed and people entered the church. The accusations never went further than denunciations, hardly even causing the supposed culprits any shame, since they were already largely immune to that feeling.

Another very old man in the village was said to have threatened others with sorcery when he was middle-aged. Villagers described him as an angry character whose ill-intentions for others came out particularly when he got drunk, along with other men, on alcohol made from the spirits used to light kerosene lanterns and stoves. His anti-social behavior occurred around the time that the hamlets were being consolidated under new leadership following a period of violent warfare and treachery. His family survived the wars but his lineage ended up fragmented and politically marginalized, not least in the largest and most influential village, where he lived apart from several of his brothers and kin. He was not at all active in the church as far as I observed. When he died many people came to his funeral wake.

His own kin were sorely grieved; however, many others came mostly to fend off accusations that they had employed sorcery to killed him and promote amity. When he died, sitting outside his house, several people from other villages confessed to me that he was a “no good” man. I had seen him act generously with his family and guests but his pathos and anger apparently sometimes overwhelmed any larger sense of community or shame he may have had.

Stephen observes that “in Melanesia ‘morality’ in general is defined in specific situations and is regarded as a product of human society and action, not a universal principle” (Stephen 1987a, 271). Rawa like to deal with their differences in open public meetings where they can be discussed and hopefully quelled. Accusations of infractions are often aired where they form displays of shame to which the community responds with efforts to have the opposing parties make indemnities and shake hands. They are occasions, following Burridge (1969a, 6-7), marked by morally redemptive acts that bring a community together and, at the same time, reveal to people the lineaments of power and obligation, opening the way to possible transformation (cf. Turner 1974; 1982). In the early 1980s, people sometimes aired accusations of sorcery at these meetings, but generally sorcery existed as an undercurrent of social life, more imagined than tangible. Only the last man discussed in this section admitted to practicing sorcery; the others just seemed to exhibit, vaguely and ambiguously, some of its imagined characteristics.

This was not always the case. Prior to the consolidation of the villages in the 1930s, Rawa say that sorcerers exerted moral control. They were known men. The Rawa colonial experience was much more like that of the Tangu than the Gebusi in regard to changes in sorcery beliefs and practices relative to colonial circumstances (Knauft, this volume). Like the Tangu, they were intensively effected by the German settlement of the north coast in the 1880s but, being further inland than the Tangu, on the southern slopes of the Finisterres, these effects were less direct and, like the Gebusi, the Rawa speakers in this area themselves actively sought development and power in the modern world. Whereas Rawa leaders likely used sorcery as a form of legitimate social control in pre-contact times, the German colonization of the north coast provoked population displacements which set off a series of vicious local wars and the practice of sorcery likewise became extreme and severe. During the 1930s, the Rawa people enjoined the help of the Lutheran missionaries to eradicate sorcery while building village communities out of the interrelated dispersed hamlets which had been fragmented during the period of internecine warfare. Sorcery did not disappear as a concern but now competed with Christianity as a means to exert social control and unify groups during this politically unsettled period. Over time, Christianity succeeded in eliminating sorcery as an explicit practice, but it continued to lurk in the form of rumor, accusation and the hidden prerogative of political leaders.

As with the Maisin, by the time I was there in the 1980s Rawa people had localized the “colonial triangle” of church, government, and ancestors (Barker, this volume). Village leaders in all three realms gained more authority by cooperating instead of competing with one another to promote village unity. However the warfare of the early colonial period had been so devastating that the authority of the ancestral practices, with which it was associated by church leaders, has been very much

undermined. Additionally, the headman of the village where I resided expressed a clear preference for church over government because, as with Tangu, Christianity has presented a principle of equivalence far more than has government.

As elsewhere in Melanesia, the Rawa's acceptance of mission Christianity shifted moral control to church-focused teachings and activities accompanied by efforts to rid themselves of sorcerers (Barker 1990b; Belshaw 1957; Tonkinson 1981a; 1981b). Christian rhetoric projected the opposition between Christian leaders and sorcerers onto a cosmic battle between good and evil. Yet on closer examination, the moral lines appear far less sharply drawn. The old men in my village used to joke that "in our day when we had our own sorcerers the village was very clean, now there's garbage everywhere." A double-edged meaning here, for sorcerers are supposed to use personal refuse in their attacks and anti-social behavior can also be conceived of as rubbish. The supposed dirtiness of the villages thus signifies not only an absence of sorcery but hints at a breakdown of the moral order. And the moral ambiguity went further. For, in the present, Rawa tend to suspect powerful *leaders* from other villages of sometimes resorting to sorcery. A key reason fellow-villagers knew the two men, despite their anti-social tendencies, could not be sorcerers is that neither had any hope of becoming prominent leaders. The path to understanding the sorcerer, then, lies through an examination of his relationship to the leader.

Sorcerers and Leaders

New Guinea is known for the association between sorcery and leadership: in Melanesia, sorcery has been found to function positively as a legitimate means of social control and leadership and as a mechanism of conflict resolution and healing. Though Africanist anthropologists followed Evans-Pritchard's observation that sorcery is an illegitimate and marginal form of magic, seeing it as a measure of social fragmentation, Malinowski found it to be a legitimate mechanism of leadership in the Trobriand Islands (Evans-Pritchard 1937; Malinowski 1926; Marwick 1982). There are dramatic examples of sorcery accusations directly reflecting strains in the social order in Melanesia (e.g., Lindenbaum 1979; 1981). However, Melanesian sorcerers are also known to provide access to sacred healing powers for their communities and to be positively rewarded for it (Stephen 1987b; cf. Tuzin 1980). These findings provide a simple and relatively well-known solution to the conundrum of the moral sorcerer: the sorcerer (in the guise of a leader) works for the greater good. However, as an empirical question the notion of legitimate sorcery has proven to be complex and problematic and as a moral stance it shares flaws with utilitarian ethics.

Stephen notes that while Melanesianist anthropologists acknowledge the legitimacy of sorcery in some situations, they generally continue to replicate the Africanist emphasis on sorcery beliefs and accusations as expressions of social tensions rather than focusing upon actual magical practices which can have positive functions (Stephen 1987b, 2; 1987c, 250-52; Zelenietz 1981b). The ethnographic record, however, is mixed. There are many examples of Melanesian cultures in which sorcery is considered to be a legitimate accompaniment of leadership or otherwise functions positively to enable conflict resolution and promote social integration. However there are also clear instances in which sorcery is considered in a negative

light and precludes leadership.⁴ Efforts to analytically sort out how and where sorcery does provide positive functions have proven difficult (Knauff 1985; Stephen 1987a). Analysts have therefore adopted a variety of political, psychological and symbolic approaches to sorcery to supplement these functional considerations. It has also been long recognized that the form and status of sorcery varies both regionally, reflecting the local forms of social and political structures, as well as historically (Zelenietz 1981a). Recent research has shown that whether or not sorcery is considered to be legitimate depends upon the context of its use, which varies not only from culture to culture but also historically (Zelenietz 1981a; Zelenietz and Lindenbaum 1981).

Attempts to sort out these differences by separating sorcery within and between communities, distinguishing between witches and sorcerers, and formulating various relations of sorcery to leadership and status recognition, have difficulties. Stephen (1981c), for example, explains the “highly incongruous” figures which are “apparent anomalies” to her typology of sorcerers and witches by deserting her basic criteria for Jungian psychological concepts. Nevertheless, she is able to establish that sorcery accusations reflect not merely strains within the community but also the loss of power held by leaders. The legitimate use of sorcery by leaders to keep order and assert control is likely to manifest itself at times when social strains and tensions are high; sorcery accusation and practice can therefore function simultaneously as legitimate tools of leadership and as measures of social tension, instead of being a mere “strain gauge” indexing inherent structural tensions.

The complexities and variations are great; but I contend that an enduring moral conundrum lies at the heart of sorcery, the dimensions of which are revealed by examining the ambiguities inherent in the persons of sorcerers and political leaders. Burridge explains that managers are caught in the paradoxical situation of having to be “first among equals” (Burridge 1975). Following this insight, Knauff arranges cases of sorcery in Melanesia along a continuum between those which promote leaders and those which act as a leveling mechanism (Knauff 1985). Burridge’s point applies not only to cultural comparisons but even more so to circumstances and phases within a single culture. It is therefore preferable to begin with Douglas’ observation that witches and sorcerers are created out of the ambiguities and paradoxes in a culture (which are often associated with change), and also with Turner’s warning that set typologies of sorcerers and witches distort social reality by disregarding social historical process (Douglas 1970; 1978; Turner 1964). Burridge comprehends historical process and overcomes the problem of typology noted by Turner by focusing upon how Tangu managers and sorcerers deal with a single element in cultural processes: the unruly anomalous *imbaket* or “divine” (Burridge 1960; 1969a; 1969b). The figure of the “sorcerer-manager” emerges out of interactions with this “divine” realm.

As Burridge summarizes his argument, the complex of notions associated with sorcery “define equivalent reciprocities by contraposition, on the one hand, and serve to enforce the same reciprocities on the other” (Burridge 1969a, 144). Much of Rawa social life can be described as the long-term assumption of “ontological debt”—the

4 For positive functions of sorcery see for example collections by Stephen (1987a) and Zelenietz and Lindenbaum (1981). For examples of illegitimate sorcery see Knauff (1985), Lederman (1981), and Rappaport (1984).

need to pay back one's existence through marriage, procreation and making good on bridewealth debts (see Errington and Gewertz 1987). Just about everyone, except for some village leaders, is recognized as at least somewhat inadequate to this task and therefore a potential target of sorcery because otherwise circumscribed and contained tensions are to some degree likely to go awry. The village where I resided had such a strong missionary tradition that its headman did not believe in using magic, which was for him an egoistic illusion. But people attributed the possession of sorcery magic to the leaders of other villages and those leaders, while generous, magnanimous and known for practicing healing magic, did nothing counter the idea that the magical powers they cultivated included sorcery.

Burridge points out that "throughout, present in a myriad of events, the effective socializer is love...If there is no love in the first days and weeks of skin contact and handling, the assertion to autonomy is likely to run wild, to come under control only through coercion" (Burridge 1979, 34-35). Where enculturation fails or finds its limits, force and coercion are the remaining recourses to create conformity and render reciprocal equivalence. This cultural political truth not only explains the "legitimate" use of sorcery by community leaders, it is also commensurate with a utilitarian consequentialist principle: "the greatest good for the greatest number." By this principle the interests of the collectivity are supposedly served best through the use of coercion or force against a minority of its non-conformist members.

Aspects of the Rawa situation seem to support the utilitarian argument. Managers are typically middle-men who operate by putting others in their debt through generosity. They then depend upon their followers to contribute labor and goods to make the events that they sponsor actually happen. The leaders I knew, like good utilitarians, saw themselves as looking after the well-being of a great many others. Yet managers can easily get caught short and have to resort to intimidation. A manager can be overextended and unable to fulfill the promises he has made in order to realize a collective event. In such a circumstance, the manager becomes something like a sorcerer except for the fact that he still depends upon the good will and faith of supporters if his position is to last. But if his exchange relations have expanded beyond well-known kin, coercion and sorcery threats may be the only way to achieve collective enterprises. As Burridge writes,

because there comes a time when a manager, reaching the limits of his productive capacity to cope with a widening circle of exchange relationships, must tap the reservoirs of confidence he has built up over the years in obligations actually met, and has to use personal qualities of persuasion to obtain credit, the temptation to resort to sorcery is almost irresistible...Few managers are not thought of as sorcerer-like, few 'known' sorcerers are not also managers (Burridge 1979, 126).

The dilemma of the Melanesian manager to be "first among equals" and to enforce equivalencies with sorcery thus provides support for the utilitarian ethical theory: while taking care of a great many followers the manager must often resort to coercion to make the events he sponsors take place. He therefore apparently coerces a minority for the sake of the greater number. As Robbins points out, leaders are far from perfect and it is the drama of enacting their leadership dilemma that makes them moral exemplars (Robbins, this volume).

Utilitarianism, however, falls short as an ethical justification for the use of sorcery. For one thing, it is not a simple matter of numbers. One cannot tell in advance if a manager's use of coercion to consolidate a political community will succeed or not. Sorcery, as Burridge reminds us, is an amoral force that need not be put to moral purpose. A manager who resorts to sorcery may do so for personal gain as well as for the collective good and with unpredictable results—possibly political tyranny or social chaos. This moral ambiguity is illustrated by the story of one would-be manager who was said to have been the last known sorcerer operating in the village where I resided. Back in the days when the village was being formed, this man apparently threatened and cajoled people in order to bring about a village community under his leadership. At one point he planted some boundary markers which he claimed had a kind of sorcery magic associated with them that would make anyone sick who attempted to transgress or remove them. His intention was to create a protective barrier which would allow him to take care of his followers, but it would also have given him a monopoly on sorcery in his community. The missionaries and the man who would become the village headman made a show of removing his barriers without succumbing to illness. A group of villagers finally pursued and cornered the sorcerer in a village house but he nevertheless escaped through the floorboards and fled, never again setting foot in the village environs. He ended up living in the nearby Ramu Sugar factory workers' compound where he ran a trade store and looked after a community of followers. He was also employed by the company as a magical healer, a practice at which he was apparently quite adept.⁵ This case illustrates that fact that it is often difficult to tell if a man attempting to employ sorcery for the greater good is indeed doing so, and hard to know if he will succeed in creating political unity instead of chaos. In this man's history, the same magician who failed to create community in one social historical circumstance succeeded in another. As I argue below, the fatal flaw with a utilitarian ethical justification of sorcery is that, even when serving the greater good, it can cause harm to individuals and promote the tyranny of the majority. Utilitarianism can, therefore, always be judged by the principle of equivalence—that all individuals are morally equal—and rejected accordingly.

Among the Rawa, sorcerers and “persons of renown” are categories usually imagined as separate beings but often combined in one person. As imagined, they share much in common. Both are extremely sensitive to the subtleties of social interactions and obligations—as Burridge says, “engaged in more interactions than most more intensely” (1979, 128). Like the Urapmin leaders Robbins describes, Rawa sorcerers are symbols to local communities by virtue of engaging more fully in the dramas and dilemmas everyone faces in the enactment of relations of equivalence with others (Robbins, this volume). Both managers and sorcerers have mystical abilities which they pursue through dreams, intuitions and by reading

5 Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington, personal information. Note that the old Rawa manager-sorcerer was also a healer, effectively combining three roles, or the roles of sorcerer and healer (e.g., Stephen 1987b; Tuzin 1980) and of manager and sorcerer (e.g., Malinowski 1926; Tonkinson 1981a; 1981b; Zelenietz 1981b) that have been found in association elsewhere in Melanesia.

natural signs to discern the truth of power and its workings within their community. Furthermore, both “act or intervene in community affairs...at moments of danger, conflict, ambiguity, and at least incipient disorder or anomie” (Burridge 1979, 129). In sum, sorcerers and managers bring about change and enable all of the elements of the social process, including healing and redemption.

Still, there are differences. Even more than the village manager, the sorcerer is an agent of change whose interventions create opportunities for redemption. The manager orchestrates community events in order to maintain and extend collective cooperative social relations, essentially bringing about change to maintain a steady state, keep underlying tensions hidden and sorcery a concealed stratagem. The sorcerer’s purpose, however, is to address these tensions openly and directly—to embody them and make them the subject of his activity. Sorcery, as imagined and manifested in accusations and gossip, ends in the open expression of hostility to existing relations and constructions of power. When a man who has a grudge to bear disappears from view and bad luck, illness or death visits someone for whom he may have had reason to bear a grudge, accusations and misgivings are aired in public and an opportunity for healing social divisions—for redemption—presents itself. Making the hidden tensions and power in a community manifest so that they may be dealt with is thus more the work of the sorcerer than the manager.

The Eye of the Sorcerer

During the early colonial period of heightened chaos, warfare and suffering, techniques for identifying and dispatching suspected sorcerers abounded and were often employed. The headman of my village and some of the other old men who lived through and experienced the violent warfare of the past described for me the classic and extreme form of indigenous Rawa sorcery which was consciously cultivated for revenge purposes in those days. It involved the most severe self-discipline imaginable during which the sorcerer virtually tortured and nearly starved himself to death in a process which culminated in the burning of hot coals in the palms of his hands. In cosmologic essence, the sorcerer made himself into a disembodied, unconstrained glob of fire or life energy, capable of consuming the life containing embodiments of his enemies. Unlike a bride’s parents, who may be unconsciously or preconsciously placed in a physical emotional state of great heat and hostility towards their in-laws, the classic sorcerer consciously enacts the personification of consuming anger and hatred. The elders emphasized how frightful the state of a practicing sorcerer was, and one can only imagine the extreme pain and distress that would lead a man to undertake such an endeavor—practically suicidal in the effort to bring harm to others. Such practices were frightful to enemies as well as to their own communities, who derived little benefit themselves in an historical situation where destructive violent activities inevitably led to more. The sorcerer was thus a sign of the overwhelming violence that had penetrated the community. At that time, German colonists had displaced populations from the north coast, who in turn took over territories by destroying entire hamlets and slaying their members, which is similar to punitive tactic used by the Germans. Men who suffered great personnel calamity and anguish in these circumstances, with nothing to lose, thus made themselves

into embodiments or, more accurately, disembodiments of overwhelming hatred. While it is possible that some people in their hamlets at that time viewed sorcerers as beneficial to their families, those old men who had witnessed their practice remembered only its horror.

Humans who have known love and nurture, especially in communities based on sharing, equivalence and reciprocity, cannot tolerate such violent conditions for very long. In the Second World War, allied soldiers were found to be able to last only about one or two weeks in battle conditions before collapsing mentally. The picture of the classic Rawa sorcerer is perhaps already that of a man who had gone mad, but not so much as to be beyond determined effort. Early efforts to bring Christian missionaries and peace were directed against these frightful practices and extreme animosities. Still, the displacements, disruptions and losses of family and local power dating from the colonial period trouble many a villager to this day. On occasion, an individual claims to practice sorcery against others, taking credit when their foes or rivals become ill or die, and threatening others with similar reprisals. Rare today, such men are without political power or support and bitter about the decline in their family fortunes and the violence suffered by their ancestors in the past. Some have gotten trapped by their own ambitions in a situation where the size of their small families and already well-established village leadership structures limit any opportunities for power, leading them to resort to sorcery claims as a means of expressing their animosity and bolstering their influence. One such man in the last several years in a village a moderate distance from the one where I resided went around taking credit for a number of illnesses and one death in the area until finally a group of men ambushed and killed him. I was told that they pleaded guilty in court but were freed while the court tried to decide how to allot their punishments, which it may never do.

From an historical perspective, the classic Rawa sorcerer can be seen as a barometer or, more aptly, a thermometer whose physical-emotional state measures his moral times and circumstances. Sorcery does not have to exist solely on the level of belief and accusation to be a gauge of the strains in a culture. The same can be said of other mystical illness with imputed social causation: they reflect and measure the conditions that give rise to them. It follows that it is moral to be a sorcerer not so much when sorcery is employed for supposedly socially constructive purposes but, instead, when one takes the perspective of the sorcerer. The sorcerer can be seen as a moral being insofar as he embodies, suffers and reflects the hidden or manifest violence in his society. This is his perspective. While this contention undermines the dichotomy of good versus evil, it reflects the contextually based moral judgments of many Melanesians. Even if the sorcerer is completely recalcitrant, the figure is still a reflection of the pathos within the culture and therefore, from an emotivist point of view, a moral being.

To adopt the sorcerer's view means to feel pain and sorrow rather than anger and hatred. Like many Pacific Islanders, Rawa speakers locate the emotions in the stomach, and speak of anger as "belly hot" (*kawuyi kokino*) and compassion or sorrow as "belly cold" (*kawuyi kingo*) using two of the most important words in the Rawa language. "Belly cold" and "giving belly" (*kawuyi no*) is the Rawa equivalent the Gebusi and Maisin moral "amity" and equivalence (Knauff, Barker, both this

volume). To simply recognize the sorcerer as a fellow human being and suffering creature therefore automatically and mystically enervates his destructive power. The antidote to anger is the provision of cooling and containing energies. Rawa speakers possess many magical techniques and methods of bringing about such states and also act in ways that have similar effects in their everyday lives.

Rawa recognize that all men are prone to experience pain and anger and to develop misgivings for one another. All men may easily become violent and fall prey to the temptation to employ sorcery. With the exception of men who openly declare their anger and threaten sorcery against their fellows, the normal reaction to someone who might be a sorcerer is to be extra-sensitive and careful and to manifest generosity and good will as much as possible. As with Tangu, Rawa "are generous and charitable to sorcerers not only because they are afraid of them, and cannot know exactly what has happened, but also because he is a man, an equivalent being. In action amity and equivalence wins out" (Burridge 1960, 109). Rawa speakers refer to this activity as "giving the belly" (*kawuyi no*) and declare it to be the basis of their culture.

"Giving the belly" is the center of Rawa culture because, through it, the potential conflict between self-interest and the social good, or what Burridge speaks of as being "self-willed" versus practising "self-restraint," which gives rise to the moral conundrums facing sorcerers and leaders alike, is effectively erased. Here the distinction between politics and ethics is annulled in Rawa culture (cf. Robbins, this volume). Most Rawa people know very well the experience of nurture and of contributing to one's family such that it is also contributing to oneself, and they measure moral action and being in relation to this experience. This is no abstract moral ideal but something real and true that they know from experienced and use to morally weigh their relations with others, both in their own culture and in the modern world of missionaries, politicians, and businessmen. There are numerous examples of Rawa speakers treating visitors, potential in-laws, in-laws, thieves, enemies, Europeans, imposing anthropologists and others in this manner, as well as associated special magical techniques to assist in so doing. "Giving the belly" involves food and song, dreaming and thought, giving and sharing, laughter, remembrance and sorrow.

In the realm of ethics, Rawa speakers would have to count as emotivists or intuitionists who base their ethical behavior on physical-emotional states rather than rational principles. Western "normative ethics," by contrast, tends to assume that ethics consists of the application of rational theoretical principles to situations which entail moral dilemmas. Normative ethics typically defines itself against relativism; however, relativism is simply another duty-based theory predicated on the principle of the universal right to cultural or individual self-determination.

Seen this way, ethical relativism simply exposes the logical inconsistency or paradox of attempting to construct universal rational ethical principles. As Kurt Gödel proved early last century in mathematics, any logical system which aspires to universality is either inconsistent or incomplete: either it will produce statements of which the opposite is also true in the system, such as relativist principles in normative ethics, or it will produce true statements which cannot be proved within the system—i.e., there is always an element outside the system which is critical

to it (see Hofstadter 1979; Nagel and Newman 1958). In the case of ethics it does both: normative ethics is contradicted by ethical relativism and, in any system of ethical principles, there is always a critical element outside of it for which it cannot account—that is ethical feelings and intuitions.

The real opposite of both normative and relativist ethical theories are emotivist or intuitionist views. Emotivist approaches are incapable of providing any certainty regarding the appropriateness of an ethical choice or behavior. However, universal ethical principles can easily be employed to dehumanize or in other ways be directed against and harm others. The history of these ethical theories shows they often provide covers, masks and rationalizations for the least ethical behavior imaginable. If one takes seriously both views and their flaws, one ends up with the irreducible necessity of formulating principles as well as the absolute universal requirement to continually question their use and in varying historical circumstances to always interrogate and reformulate them on the basis of ethical intuitions. This is the profound and irresolvable conundrum at the heart of ethical theory that confounds human moral action and thought. When principles cease working intuitions provide the foundation for ethical behavior. They do so during the divine, anomalous, liminal historical moments that Douglas and Turner thought characteristic of both witchcraft and sorcery. They are thus inchoate and impossible to know or determine unequivocally.

The Rawa sorcerer is the surest sign of principles that have ceased working—the gauge or thermometer that measures the anger and hatred that has been instilled in the belly of a community as a result of historical experience. The role of the sorcerer can thus be seen as involved in bringing about a type of theodicy, with the sorcerer as an agent of divine justice (Barker 1990). As Burridge writes, “In himself...the ranguma [sorcerer] is, and personifies, the unmoral or non-moral or even amoral” (Burridge 1969b, 156). Like Tangu and other Melanesians, Rawa people do not see the sorcerer as essentially evil but rather make their judgements on the basis of circumstances (Burridge 1969b, 135; Stephen 1987c; Zelenietz 1981a). But from the sorcerer’s point of view, he is as moral as any other being, not in following rational principles or helping others but in his capacity to intuit the moral conditions to which he has been victim. The Rawa answer to the sorcerer’s predicament is compassion or sorrow, which is now often expressed through principles adopted from Christian missionaries.

There are plenty of ethical intuitionists in the Western tradition, from Schopenhauer to Tolstoy, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Sartre. Yet these theories are the existentialist exceptions rather than the rational rule and the tradition is more fundamentally based on the misapplication of supposedly universal principles by the likes of James and John Stewart Mill. It is no wonder that, like Tangu, Rawa speakers consider white men to be like sorcerers.

Conclusion: Morality and Modernity

In several places in his writings Burrridge makes the comparison between Europeans and sorcerers (Burrridge 1960, 1969b).⁶ This connection has also been noted by other Melanesian ethnographers (see e.g., Bashkow 2006, 221; Clark 2000, 45-47). In the Tangu view, both Europeans and sorcerers are *imbaketas* or “divine” in being uncontrollable and unpredictable. Moreover, Europeans do not engage in reciprocal relations or relations of equivalence with Tangu. Instead they manifest the arrogance and self-willed character associated with sorcerers. Like sorcerers white men are strangers, singular and unobliged. They value privacy and are prone to keep to themselves. “Like sorcerers, white men beget trouble” (Burrridge 1960, 39). Singular, individualistic, arrogant, and self-willed like sorcerers, Europeans are seemingly free of interdependent ties with reciprocal others: “On the one hand, the reciprocities of community life in Tangu insist upon pairings, on the other hand the ranguma [sorcerer], the Christian, the European, money, and life on the coast do not” (Burrridge 1969b, 347).

Rawa speakers never explicitly compared Europeans with sorcerers but often quizzed me about having to pay for lodging when I went to stay with other Europeans. Although I explained to them that I did not have to pay them for food and lodging, I never was able to dispel the notion that white men, as Rawa people observed, “live only on money” without the reciprocal interdependencies necessary to a productive social life. This puts Europeans squarely in the category of sorcerers. Sorcerers do not “live only on money,” but they do stay to themselves and eschew reciprocal interdependencies. As a result, like Europeans, they tend to become pretty self-certain about their particular view of the world and own abilities. Sorcerers would seem to be a version of European homo economicus however, unlike sorcerers, Europeans are apparently unaffected by the passions, both positive and negative, that drive Rawa reciprocal interdependencies. In addition, like sorcerers, European society puts a strong emphasis on competition for jobs, resources, and money with its peculiar combination of Darwinian ideology and capitalist institutions.

However like Tangu, Rawa people think that Europeans are immune to sorcery, at least until they come to learn the local language and, as my Rawa friends told me, come to believe in the efficacy of local magical practices.⁷ European medical cures are also thought not to be able to address sorcery. In addition, besides the fact that sorcerers do not “live only on money,” white men apparently do not practice the asceticism that sorcerers do or manifest their sullen and morose characters but instead are apparently quite happy, unfettered by reciprocal obligations. And unlike Rawa sorcerers, who might be redeemed by re-engaging them in reciprocal equivalencies, most Europeans remain recalcitrantly unobliged. Only a few missionaries and many fewer government agents have exemplified the reciprocal qualities of what Burrridge call the “moral European.”

6 See Burrridge (1960, 39, 233, 278; 1969b, 150, 159, 346-47, 455-56).

7 A point I do not explore here is the possibility that skeptical lack of belief in the power of others' magic is perhaps also a trait of sorcerers.

The Rawa experience of relations with the outside world of Europeans is mixed. While they place hope in the “moral European” and generally approach outsiders by eliciting compassion they have also been disappointed many times and have a history of resisting outside influences that fail to produce long-term relations of reciprocal equivalence. They have learned not to trust Europeans as well as many natives outside of their own circles of interdependency and realize how limited that capacity is in the modern world. They treat Europeans and other strangers with power with whom they have dealings as capricious beings who occasionally can be made to engage with them in reciprocal relations but who otherwise need to be kept outside of their circle of stable supportive relations. They have thus adjusted to the modern world by adjusting their boundaries, on the one hand expanding them into new arenas while on the other hand strengthening them against the threats these external forces pose.

In his essay on individuality Burridge quotes Alex Inkles to characterize the condition of “modernity,” which Burridge himself describes as “a desideratum, an ideal...in short a mixture of what is, what was, and what might or will be, a manifestation of the perception of flux, of an unfolding, of developmental processes at work” (Burridge 1979, 241). “Modernity” here is a vision of the development of morality as the unfolding of an awareness of self-restraint over self-willedness: i.e., the development of the “moral European” who as an autonomous self-willed character nonetheless engages in relations of reciprocal equivalence (cf. Burridge 1969a). But earlier in the same essay Burridge discusses Kierkegaard’s distinction between the “special individual” and the “man of movement” in the modern world.⁸ The “special individual” is a European-style autonomous, self-willed being who nonetheless, “through sacrifice, by his own immolation,...reconciles himself with the universal” (Burridge 1979, 68). The “man of movement,” on the other hand, “is the charlatan, the spurious ‘special individual,’ one who acts as though he were a ‘special individual’ but who in fact has no real and lasting conviction, whose course is altogether temporal” (Burridge 1979, 69). He is simply a *homo economicus* calculating his own greatest good above all. Kierkegaard’s “man of movement” is a politically-oriented individual of worldly ambitions who often triumphs in seeking to become the head of a movement, but who is ethically confused in being convinced of his own righteousness, which he confounds with his own worldly success. And Burridge writes that “Kierkegaard’s ‘special individual,’ familiar in the history of Western civilization as an ideal, is only rarely encountered in person” (Burridge 1979, 70).

Kierkegaard was perhaps the earliest and most trenchant critic of European modernism, writing about and experiencing it at the moment of its inception. A brilliant literary and psychological observer, Kierkegaard’s position as a figure within Western European culture who was nevertheless alienated from it, and who wrote within and against the emerging European modernism of the mid-nineteenth century, makes him particularly useful to anthropologists trying to fathom the unfavorable perceptions of people outside the modern European tradition who have

8 I have to thank Burridge most of all for sending me to Kierkegaard through his writings.

likewise endeavored to understand the unusual behavior of whitemen. I believe that Kierkegaard's insights into modern culture accord well with the views of many of the Rawa people I have known, illuminate their critical perspectives, and so would be of some interest to them. While I suppose it is important to remain hopeful about the development of awareness and morality, to work for and have faith in it, I find that Kierkegaard was correct in his observation that modernity is largely the triumph of the "man of movement." And I think that Burrige has put his finger on an element of the key conundrum in ethical practice in the modern world: the need to balance worldly success and ethical action. Much as ethical principles can be employed for good or ill and ethical feelings and ethical intuitions appear arbitrary, one cannot be ethically effective without succeeding in this world, but one does not become ethical in the course of doing so. The "man of movement" fools himself and abides by all the ethical rules while having none of their underlying intuitions.

In this chapter, I have endeavored to show that understanding the fundamental role of intuitions in ethical behavior allows one to appreciate the sorcerer as a moral being who reflects the social moral conditions around him, and that an emotivist approach to human ethical behavior is consistent with Rawa people's understanding of human conduct, while the rationalist approach is the mainstay of Western ethics. If as Rawa people suppose ethical principles are ultimately based on ethical senses, then acting ethically requires a great deal of introspection, self-awareness, and understanding to sort out when the unconscious organic striving for power and success in the world for which humans are made, or one's own self or ego enhancement, underlies one's behavior rather than altruism or love. As Burrige and Kierkegaard both recognize, ambitious men in the modern world are more likely to fail in the attempt, which requires enormous self-discipline and a leap of faith beyond the capacity of most modern people. Burrige appears to understand, from Kierkegaard, that this leap of faith provides a way out of the dilemma of having to rationally formulate intuitions and intuit the basis of rational principles, and to help others while taking care of oneself.

In his first book *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard explored the contrast between two modern modes of human existence, the aesthetic and the moral (Kierkegaard 1983). The former is such a good description of the modern Western world is it hard not to be amazed at Kierkegaard's prescience. The aesthete pursues worldly sensory experiences and pleasures. Ranging from the development of very refined tastes to gross hedonism, in his view the aesthetic mode of being ultimately leads to self-defeating boredom and unhappiness because of its devotion to the self, power, and pleasure. The aesthete may therefore come to choose the ethical mode of existence in which he devotes himself to other beings and to his own perfection within a moral system. However the ethical man must continually judge his own actions from a position outside himself and is ultimately frustrated in trying to achieve moral perfection if he is honest with himself. Discovering his own incapacity and the flaws in any system of ethical principles he chooses, the ethical man finds himself caught in an untenable predicament between the ethical and the aesthetic. The way out of this predicament in Kierkegaard's view is a leap of faith into the religious mode of existence, which he described in his second book *Fear and Trembling* (1987). Here Kierkegaard dwells on the story of Abraham and Isaac and describes a movement

of infinite resignation and faith. This resignation produces an existence where the self plays no role except to be sacrificed for something beyond one's ability to comprehend and requires the absurd faith that one ultimately regains oneself as a result, beyond all calculation or measure.

My Rawa friends never told the story of Abraham and Isaac but were impressed by the sacrifice of Jesus. They also venerate their ancestors for the sacrifices they made and measure their own behavior in terms of what it brings for future generations. Life, for them, is gift and sacrifice, and giving something for nothing is many ways the essence of "giving belly" to another to elicit compassion and sorrow. Giving is in the end an incalculable expenditure of life energies for an unknown future that places one among the realm of the ancestors as well as makes one a good Christian. Rawa speakers see this simply as a natural process as well as a moral duty, although it never becomes a moral issue until it is thrown in doubt.

Europeans appear curiously unaware if not largely in denial of this necessity, since they endeavor to predict and control the future with science and rational moral precepts. Sorcerer-leaders act to provide the boundary mechanisms that are necessary to keep this expenditure among one's descendants and become an ancestor whose expenditure is at least commemorated. In the process they put themselves in dangerous situations and engage in magical procedures which require self-denial. Indeed Rawa speakers expect big-men to suffer and likely die at the hands of sorcerers—either rival big-men or disgruntled villagers whose power they have usurped. The classic disaffected "evil" sorcerer practices ascetic self-abnegation as an expression of the complete loss or eclipse of forgotten or frustrated life energy expenditure, and is thus a poignant marker of the same moral project that engages other Rawa people.

This page intentionally left blank

PART II
THE MORALITY
OF MODERNITY

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 4

Moral Exchange and Exchanging Morals: Alternative Paths of Cultural Change in Papua New Guinea¹

Bruce M. Knauft

Introduction

This chapter concerns striking similarities and equally striking differences between the Gebusi and the Tangu, two small hinterland Melanesian societies that lay some 400 kilometers distant from each other across the vast bulk of mainland Papua New Guinea. Aside from location, Tangu and the Gebusi differ in that Tangu have been subject to influence by Western trade goods, colonial influence, and labor out-migration since at least the late 19th century, whereas Gebusi were first effectively contacted by outsiders in 1963. The ethnographic accounts of these societies differ as well; the Tangu were studied by Kenelm Burridge starting in the 1950s, while the Gebusi were studied by me and my wife, Eileen Cantrell Knauft, beginning in 1980. Despite these differences, striking similarities in Tangu and Gebusi morality—and in their emphasis on moral equivalence in particular—pose an intriguing question: Why is it that Tangu, after prolonged outside influence, remained in many ways morally and culturally resistant to fundamental change, while Gebusi have experienced pronounced cultural change if not transformation in these same regards over a short period of sixteen years, from 1982 to 1998—despite a general absence of economic development? This chapter addresses the similarities and differences between Gebusi and Tangu in this regard. In the process, my account addresses issues of

1 This chapter is dedicated to Kenelm Burridge, whose writings first engaged me in 1974, when I was twenty years old. Burridge's works were the most important single authorial influence in persuading me to become a Melanesianist. My senior BA thesis at Yale, written under Harold Scheffler and Donald Black considered the relation between the Burridgean notion of equivalence and the dynamics of colonial impact in Melanesia through a comparative study of twenty "cargo cults." Though I never met or corresponded with him prior to 2003, Burridge's core ideas informed my first fieldwork among Gebusi and percolated into my subsequent career. This chapter is an attempt, long belated, to publicly recognize and draw upon the specific value of his ethnography and its spirit of equivalence.

Special thanks are extended to John Barker, not only for organizing the conference on which this volume is based, but for his insightful and penetrating comments on an earlier version of this chapter. Though I have tried to benefit from John's perspicacious remarks, all shortcomings in this chapter remain my own.

morality and values in relation to cultural continuity and change across Melanesia more generally.

Gebusi

When I first arrived among them in 1980, the Gebusi of Papua New Guinea's Western Province appeared to be one of the most culturally remote and so-called unacculturated groups in the country. Seventeen years earlier, in 1963, they had still been using stone axes when first effectively "contacted" by Australian patrol officers. To this day, their area still has no travelable roads to other parts of the country. In 1980, Gebusi had no significant mission influence, no out-migration, and no significant cash cropping or other cash economy. They boasted robust and continuing public traditions of male initiation (including male-male sexuality and insemination), all-night spirit séances, inter-village fights, and elaborate divinations, inquests, and accusations concerning sorcery. Compared to other Melanesian groups, Gebusi were distinctive in taking the leveling functions of sorcery accusation to an extreme. Along with studies of their spirit life, shamanism, and cosmology, I documented them to have had one of the highest homicide rates known in the cross-cultural ethnographic record. Their killing was not primarily from warfare but from the execution of accused sorcerers, largely within the community to which they belonged (Knauft 1985a; 1985b; 1986; 1987a; 1987b; 1987c; 1989).

The moral basis for this pattern was a strong if not radical regime of what Burridge (1969b) termed existential equivalence through direct exchange. Among Gebusi, this dynamic included sister-exchange marriage, immediate reciprocity at feasts, and the taking of the life of the accused sorcerer in direct exchange for the life of the person who had died from sickness. Underlying these bare social facts was a value system that placed strong emphasis on amity and equivalence. This was epitomized in the key Gebusi term *kogwayay*, which they used more generally to refer to their distinctive customs and way of life as a whole. In referential terms, *kogwayay* may be roughly glossed as "good company." The three morphemes of the word convey its meanings. *Kog* is the morphemic root of Gebusi words that connote togetherness, being alike, similarity, and comradeship or friendship. *Wa* is the Gebusi verb root "to talk"—a term that refers not to directive speech, haranguing, or monologic discourse but to casual, friendly, and free-floating dialogues that lace Gebusi social interactions and particularly the social life of their longhouses during the evening. *Yay* is the Gebusi lexical root for cheering, joking, or yelling in exuberant and joyous collectivity or in friendly riposte.

In practical usage, the component parts of Gebusi *kogwayay*—togetherness, casual talk, and exuberant cheering or joking—referred not only to a social ethic of social friendship and political equity but to a spiritual and cosmological amity. This reciprocity and equivalence pervaded both the extensive Gebusi spirit world and the means by which Gebusi themselves accessed this world—through Gebusi spirit mediums who married spirit women. The relatives, friends, and children of these spirit women came inside the medium's body during spirit séances. They exchanged

their spirits with his own and spoke in elaborate songs to the assembled audience of Gebusi men and boys.

The flipside of Gebusi morality and sociality emerged as deep-seated but hard-to-acknowledge anger and resentment in the context of inequality and lack of reciprocity, especially among adult men. This tension was especially pronounced between patrilineages that were affinally linked by marriages that had not been reciprocated—that were not sister-exchanges. Nonreciprocal marriages frequently resulted from the willful and insistent desires of young men and women to choose their own marital partners despite the objections of the woman's natal kin. Almost half of Gebusi first marriages (48%) formed in this way, i.e., nonreciprocally. These included some of the oldest marriages known—both extant and genealogically.

In the Gebusi social and moral world, there was no easy way that structural inequity between the bride's and groom's patrilineages could be rectified in cases of unreciprocated marriage. In a society vigilantly dedicated to immediate exchange, Gebusi did not admit or accommodate substantial compensation by exchange of material goods. Thus, for instance, they did not promote or accept major exchanges of bridewealth or other forms of compensation.

Statistically, the high rate of homicide within Gebusi communities was highly correlated with non-reciprocated marriages. In particular, sorcery accusations and killings were by far greatest between patrilineages linked by one or more marriages that had not been reciprocated. In essence, matrimonial breaches of person-for-person exchange were ultimately responded to with person-for-person exchange in the realm of death: the life of an accused sorcerer was expunged in reciprocity for the death of a person who died from sickness. The vigilance of this system was reflected in a rate of indigenous killing that amounted to virtually one-third of all adult Gebusi deaths. Its moral and spiritual dimensions adhered in the fact that death and sorcery inquests were orchestrated by entranced Gebusi spirit mediums during spirit séances—that is, through the agency of their equivalent spirits.

Notably, Gebusi did not have indigenous community headman, big-men, or what Burridge (1975) calls "managers." Par contra, the aggressiveness associated with would-be leaders easily became a magnet of antagonism among Gebusi—and eventually the target of sorcery accusations and lethal violence against those who tried to lead by authority rather than by personal example. As such, Gebusi leadership was vigilantly decentralized. By contrast, Gebusi spirit mediums—through the vicarious agency of their spirit-world friends—exerted influence that was both important and displaced from their own identity.

To round out this cycle of equivalence and vigilant reciprocity, most Gebusi recommitted themselves to pro-social and positive reciprocity in the wake of sorcery inquests and executions. Persons who were closely related to those killed as sorcerers were often reabsorbed, re-amalgamated, and eventually co-resided in longhouse communities along with those who had killed or abetted the killing of their relatives. In the multi-clan structure of Gebusi longhouse communities, amity and equivalence were often ultimately re-established.

Alongside and against this internal Gebusi dynamic were both the constant threat and the reality of self-willed outsiders. Of particular significance here were the numerous, densely populated, and aggressive ethnic neighbors of the Gebusi, the

Bedamini. During the pre-colonial era, Bedamini undertook devastating raids into Gebusi territory. Some of these forays decimated entire Gebusi villages. If Australian colonial officers had not arrived and put an effective end to Bedamini raids during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Gebusi might well have been a largely moribund ethnic group of refugees by the time we arrived to live among them in 1980. In 1980, Gebusi numbered about 450 as opposed to the approximately 3,800 Bedamini.

Indigenously, then, Gebusi lived in the shadow of larger and overarching inequalities that were based on aggression—the military power of their populous ethnic neighbors. During the 1960s and 70s, however, this power was supplanted by a new authority—that of Australian colonial officers. Delightfully if somewhat ironically for Gebusi, Australian officers directed virtually all of their regional force and attention against the Bedamini. In the process, they left Gebusi largely alone. By the early 1980s, Gebusi had benefitted greatly from the curtailment of Bedamini raids as well as from the modest influx of Australian steel axes and knives—which enabled Gebusi to cut bigger gardens and build larger and more numerous houses. On the other hand, Gebusi received little direct intervention or influence from Australians themselves—apart from the yearly colonial census patrol that meandered through their territory. Gebusi were described in government reports as “quiet tractable people who have seldom given the Administration any difficulty” (Barclay 1970–71, unpaginated). In fact, Gebusi often remained free enough to continue executing sorcerers in the bush without government knowledge or interference. To a surprising degree, then, the power of Australians provided Gebusi both the autonomy and the space to elaborate their own cultural and social forms. In some ways, when we first lived with them in 1980–82, Gebusi had been liberated to proliferate their own forms of indigeneity.

Gebusi Times Changing

When I went back to live and work among Gebusi in 1998, I found that many things had changed, if not been transformed (Knauff 2002a; 2002c; 2005). Eighty-four percent of the adults were now baptized Christians and regular churchgoers in either the Catholic, the Evangelical, or the Seventh Day Adventist churches. All of the boys and almost all of the school-aged girls were daily pupils for seven hours a day, five days a week, at the local community school. Gebusi boasted talented rugby and soccer teams; these vied in refereed competition against squads of other communities and ethnic groups on the ballfield at the main government station. Gebusi women lugged heavy net bags of produce twice a week in an often fruitless attempt to sell their food at the local market.

These changes and others had emerged without an appreciable change in economic development, political intrusion, or coercion. Gebusi brought themselves before the agents and institutions of the post-colonial state rather than the reverse. Previously a people of the deep lowland rainforest, a number of communities picked up and moved to within a short walking distance of the government station. This was done with the express purpose of attending the station’s churches, having children attend its school, enabling village women to bring food to the local market, and

allowing men to play in sports leagues on the government ballfield. It was hard not to conclude that the Gebusi I had lived with had quite willingly adopted a self-conscious local modernity. In comparative perspective, recent Gebusi actions have paralleled those of selected other Melanesian societies in which social and cultural change has been embraced with fervor and intensity (e.g., Burt 1994; Dwyer and Minnegal 1998; Gostin 1986; cf., Robbins 2004).

In the mix, many of Gebusi's previous customs were vestigial or moribund. All night spirit séances, which had previously been held an average of once every eleven nights, were entirely a thing of the past. All the previous spirit mediums had either died or cut their tie with the spirits—and no new spirit mediums had been indoctrinated. Men's singing with the spirit world had been replaced by guitar and ukulele ballads modeled on cassette music heard from bands in other parts of the country. The world of the traditional spirits had virtually disappeared, and male initiations and ritual homosexuality were extinct or almost so in all but the most remote villages.

Beyond these differences of custom and specific belief were changes of subjectivity and affect—a deeper change of culture. Gebusi notions of temporality, in which the future was assumed to repeat the past, increasingly emphasized the unfolding of social time as a path of anticipated progress. Whereas indigenous Gebusi temporal markers, generational naming practices, and subsistence practices had emphasized cyclicity, Gebusi activities at school, church, in sports, and at the market were increasingly evaluated against the success or failure of personal achievement or development over a finite period of time. People now feared being “late” at such activities and also feared failure at the end of marked time periods of intended accomplishment or improvement—not performing well in school on the Friday test, not being ready for Judgment Day at the Sunday church service, not having scored enough points by the end of the rugby match, or not having sold any food by the end of the twice-weekly market.

At the same time, Gebusi had developed a surprising penchant for sitting quietly and absorbing the teachings, harangues, and directives of outsiders: the pastor in church, the teacher in school, the government official, the dictates of the market boss, and the referee on the ballfield. None of these personages were Gebusi; rather, they were Papua New Guineans from other parts of the country who had come to bring national and religious enlightenment to this out-of-the-way part of the country. If Gebusi had before been a people who would sooner slay a sorcerer than tolerate a sense of existential inequity, they were now ripe subalterns in a newly modern world of social, political, and spiritual hierarchy. God was an apt symbol of the absolute authority held by the world beyond the horizon, just as his religious and political emissaries from other parts of the country (themselves almost invariably Christian) dominated the modern institutions that Gebusi were so enamored of as passive subjects. Though Gebusi maintained a looser and more equivalent social life in their own community, it was notable to see Gebusi men in the community echo the same rhetorical and authoritarian style in the village that pervaded the church, the classroom, and government activities—and without opposition from their fellow villagers.

As if to reflect the acceptance of subordination to outside power rather than its resistance, the Gebusi rate of sorcery accusation and violence had fallen precipitously. Though real-world murder as homicide had previously accounted for 32.7% of all adult Gebusi deaths, the rate of killing dropped steadily during the 1980s until punctuated by one final beheading in 1988. Then it fell to zero for all of the 1990s. Funerals are now carried out in a surprisingly Christian manner with the outside pastors officiating. The previous passion of community divinations and the practice of sorcery violent inquests have practically ceased.

If the Gebusi model of person-for-person direct exchange has been broken in the realm of death—the life of a presumed sorcery suspect is no longer taken in exchange for that of the sickness victim—the same is true in marriage and in feasting. In contrast to earlier days, not a single marriage that took place in my communities of study between 1982 and 1998 was a sister-exchange. Patterns of inter-village ritual feasting and traditional dancing have become “parties” (*fati*) in which asymmetry is created between the prestigious store-bought rice and tinned fish of the hosts and the merely traditional dried game brought by the visitors. Instead of traditional dancing, festivities now revolve around string band music and teenage disco dancing to cassettes of rock music.

In many ways, Gebusi have not just grappled with a new world of modern cultural hierarchy but been fundamentally changed through willing subordination to it. Still not subject to land alienation, significant wage employment, or dramatically altered means of subsistence, they could easily return to the large tracts of largely uninhabited forest land that they now frequent only occasionally. But they chose instead to live within the near orbit of the government station and its modern institutions and associated activities—even though their economic benefit is but minimal in the bargain. Why is this? A comparison to, and contrast with, Kenelm Burridge’s earlier work on the Tangu is helpful in addressing this question.

Tangu

During the late 19th century in a hinterland off the eastern coast of New Guinea, the four neighborhoods that later formed the collective polity of Tangu were only nominally differentiated from surrounding peoples and communities (Burridge 1956, 427; 1957c, 56; 1966, 393, 396). These four neighborhoods—Wanitzir, Riekitzir, Biampitzir, and Mangigumitzir—spoke dialects that were mutually intelligible, as were those of other adjacent groups (Burridge 1966, 396). At this early period, Tangu social life appeared aggregated within each individual settlement, including through men’s houses or *garamb*, which exerted social control and discipline, enforced taboos, and socialized and circumcised young men (Burridge 1959a, 198; 1969b, 171ff). Under the auspices of the men’s house, groups were also organized for collective ritual and warfare (Burridge 1966, 403; 1969b, 37).

Though three of the four neighborhoods were matrifocal in kinship emphasis one of them, Wanitzir, was patrilineal in orientation (1966, 403; 1969b, 37). In geographic and socioeconomic terms, Wanitzir was oriented more towards the coast and had ties of kinship, myth, and custom that affiliated it with seaward peoples

(1956, 415; 1957c, 57). Ultimately, then, Tangu came to be composed of two different groups, one having migrated inland, and the other cluster of three communities having moved toward the coast (1956, 415; 1960, 117; 1969b, 9). At their inception, relations between the four neighborhoods were insecure and easily lapsed into hostility (Burridge 1960; 119 1969b, 16). And even after their coalescence, the four neighborhoods exhibited antagonism through sorcery suspicions, ritual hostility, and idealization of the brother-sister relationship as the preferred marriage link (Burridge 1958, 46, 49, 61; 1966).

Cohesion among Tangu was fueled by the benefits of economic interdependence, on the one hand, and the need for alliance against hostile neighbors, on the other (1969b, 15-17). Only Wanitzir supplied clay cooking pots, which were in great demand. Other items were more accessible in the other Tangu neighborhoods: arecanut, tobacco, pandanus, betel nut, and sago, the latter two of which were particularly important for trade (1957c, 57). Riekitzir and Mangigumitzir additionally promoted a lively trade in string bags (1957c). Procuring salt may also have stimulated common trade relations, since a large salt pool was located centrally amid the four neighborhoods (1969b, 53). In this context, warfare pressure from outside helped congeal the four neighborhoods for defensive purposes, perhaps a bit like Donald Tuzin (1997; cf., 1980; 1976) described for the Ilahita Arapesh in the Sepik. This defense had trade implications, since one of the enemy groups, the Diawat, threatened to cut off the funnel of coastal good to Wanitzir and hence to the other Tangu neighborhoods. Items such as beads, iron, cloth, and hunting dogs were all transmitted in this manner. For a variety of reasons, then, the four neighborhoods of Tangu banded together (Burridge 1957c, 57; 1959b, 137; 1966, 394; 1969b, 15).

Invariably however, integration was compromised by lack of a common system of dispute settlement, kinship, land tenure, and marriage, which was frequently by wife-stealing (1960, 121; 1966, 394). Crucial here was the development of shared ritual elements and display in exchange ceremonies of reciprocation, if also competition between the four neighborhoods. Through this means and other social interactions, Burridge suggests, nascent Tangu settlements became gradually familiar with each other's men's house rituals, dances, and narratives. Even in the 1950s, it remained important for a Tangu manager to be proficient in the dance variations of adjacent Tangu neighborhoods (1966, 401; 1969b, 15). Eventually, the dance, display, and oratory of inter-neighborhood reciprocal food exchanges (the Tangu *br'ngun'guni*) became the diagnostic feature of collective Tangu sociality. Gradually, those from the four neighborhoods became viewed as brothers, while, reciprocally, the locus of antagonism could be internalized between those who *were* in fact brothers (1959b, 152).

Over time, a shared system of kinship groups, the *gagai*, spread and laid the basis for a shared polity throughout the four neighborhoods (1957c, 68, 72). The *gagai* was an alliance system whereby communities that were previously independent could be classified as members of the same moiety (1957c, 67; 1969b, 8). Over time, the *gagai* came to allocate land and forge and adjudicate political alliances as well as forming an exogamous group that Burridge describes as "jurally compact" (1957b, 85, 89; 1957c, 68, 72; 1969b, 12ff). Though the original word *gagai* had merely meant "settlement" or "section" in the three matrifocal neighborhoods, it gradually became

an overarching kin system that encompassed the patrifocal kin system of Wanitzir as well (1957b, 85; 1957c, 67, 71; 1969b, 8). Far from marginalizing Wanitzir, this system allowed the latter neighborhood to exploit its economic and geographic position as middlemen between inland groups and coastal ones (1966, 394; 1969b, 15). During the early 20th century, this position was as lucrative as it was precarious, as the Germans were introducing large quantities of coveted artificial dogs' teeth and other goods (1956, 427; 1958, 53; 1966, 394). Into the 1950s, Wanitzir seemed to remain the most wealthy of the four Tangu neighborhoods, serving as a dispensary for Western goods and influence (1966, 406, 408; 1969b, 24, 47, 136, 174).

Against this coalescing system were complementary atomizing influences. A severe epidemic around the turn of the century reduced the population of probably several thousand by a significant number. Distrust and suspicions of sorcery intensified within and between family groups (1969b, 18). Gender relations were strained, as women were particularly susceptible to the introduced disease, which had symptoms similar to that visited by male sorcery. And a shortage of women spurred an increased flurry of wife-stealing. In the mix, the constraints of the men's clubhouses weakened and Tangu social relations fragmented and dispersed, resulting in a dislike for nucleated settlement that persisted at least until the mid-twentieth century (see 1957c, 60; 1959a, 189; 1966, 397; 1969b, 5, 57). In the ethnographic present of the 1950s, Tangu brothers were essentially rivals, and antagonism *within* cooperating neighborhoods was as great as, or greater than, that between exchange partners from different communities. Sorcery remained a constant threat in neighborhoods as well as between them (1957c, 139; 1966, 394, 402).

In this context, even brotherly solidarity demanded explicit demonstration of equivalence similar to that forged between erstwhile outsiders in other neighborhoods (1969b, 37, 56-57). Reciprocally, kinship increasingly became a function of convenience rather than *a priori* conformity (1957a, 184; 1959b, 152, 139, 147; 1969b, 20).

Across this background came the colonial changes of the twentieth century. For Tangu, these included first and foremost regular labor recruitment of young men to the coast, some seventeen miles away. To this was added gradual pacification and Christianization through the establishment of a mission at Wanitzir. By the early 1950s, 85% of a total Tangu population of about 2,000 was considered nominally Christian, with 25% of the population, mostly women, designated by Burridge as active church-goers (1969b, 27n.1). By contrast, the older generation of men in many households remained skeptical and anti-Christian holdouts.

At least as important as Christianity for Tangu was the shift from German to Australian administration in the New Guinea territory following World War One, and then the invasion of the Tangu area by the Japanese during World War Two. This, in turn, was followed by the reinvasion of the area by allied forces, including the dramatic bombing of the Christian mission by allied planes, since this was used as a Japanese outpost.

For Tangu, the turning and conclusion of the war produced an immense American military presence in nearby Manus Island, followed by huge stocks of equipment left behind, and, at the war's end, payment of indemnities. By the early 1950s, however,

almost all of this windfall infusion of wealth had been dissipated or withdrawn. In Wanitzir, the mission was struggling to reassert itself.

Tangu in Analytic Perspective

Stepping back from this historical mosaic, we can reconsider the dynamic features of social morality emphasized in many of Burridge's publications on the Tangu. Equivalence was actively asserted and assiduously maintained between brothers as well as between neighborhoods through *br'ngun'guni*. Self-willed or unrestrained behavior on a local level was mediated by exchange and moral equivalence. This informed what Burridge described as the preliminary dialectic between the reciprocal and non-reciprocal and between the moral and the self-willed, amoral, or divine.

These tensions resolved themselves in Tangu equivalence and stasis, termed *mgnwotngwotiki*, in which a state of neutral equality was achieved between erstwhile competitive exchange partners. As Burridge shows in *Tangu Traditions* (1969b), however, this state was temporary at best; the social separation of equality and neutrality invariably gave way once again to active demonstration of equivalence through competitive exchange. These tensions were also engaged on a larger scale by what Burridge calls the historical dialectic, which includes the inequality and lack of equivalence that Tangu suffered in their relationship with whites. The relation between the internal Tangu dialectic and the larger historical dialectic, which it both informed and became a part, is illustrated both in the millenarian myth-dreams of cargo cultists and the extensive indigenous narratives of Tangu traditions. As such, the categories of the moral and the divine, the disciplined and the unconstrained both complemented and redefined each other over time.

What does this have to do with so-called modern change and to the kind of more seemingly radical but less externally-motivated transformations that I have described for Gebusi? On the one hand Burridge tells us, toward the end of *Tangu Traditions* (1969b, 451) that, "Manipulation of persons and categories doubtless existed in the past. Yet one may assume that it was not as general a feature of social life as it is today." One of the results, as he suggests in selective Durkheimian fashion, is a "lack of sustained metaphysic" and "growing anomy" (1969b, 439). As such, if the Tangu category of *imbatekas*—the self-willed, odd, awe-some, and divine—existed in the 19th century, it became progressively mapped onto Europeans and Americans, who were almost self-evidently powerful, non-reciprocal, odd, and materially efficacious, and also onto aspiring Tangu as well. This went hand in hand with other European-inspired changes during the first half of the 20th century: an epidemic of disease; the disruption and then intensification and inflation of trade relations through the introduction of artificial dog teeth and other trade goods; the German pacification and later missionization of various groups; and the opening of individual managerial and more entrepreneurial capacities for Tangu managers by the demise of the men's clubhouse, the solidary settlement, and the collective fighting group. From early in the 20th century, many and then most young Tangu men spent time on coastal plantations in lieu of traditional initiation. In later decades, these experiences abroad

were intensified by the military activities and services provided by or demanded of Tangu by Europeans, Japanese, and Americans during World War Two.

In this context, we can see how incipient categories of self-willed and amoral power become magnified, projected, and re-internalized in larger proportions among Tangu themselves, at once challenging and intensifying their indigenous moral system. The term “dialectic” that Burridge uses may indeed be an appropriate one. We can also see how a preliminary dialectic within Tangu was encompassed and made more intense and conflicted by what Burridge calls a larger historical dialectic. In essence, we have from Burridge in 1969 an intriguing model of cultural change. Unlike the theories put forth by Marshall Sahlins a dozen and more years later (1981; 1985; 1995), Burridge’s model is not driven ultimately by the sudden impact of external forces, a cataclysmic arrival of outsiders, nor by a relatively static continuity of cultural logics already in place. His model embraces the tensions of developing awareness in lived experience rather than the disjunctions and synchronies of symbolic logic or structure.

Comparisons and Contrasts

Here we may make selective comparisons and contrasts between Tangu and Gebusi. While Tangu were influenced by Westerners since at least the 19th century, Gebusi were not effectively contacted until 1963. Other contrasts are equally if not more striking. After many decades of outside contact, Tangu in the 1950s still absorbed the categories of Western authority and eccentricity within the parameters of their own moral system. Tangu assertions of local equivalence were, if anything, hyper-robust. Local assertions of equivalent exchange and reciprocal fears and suspicions of sorcery were intensified rather than reduced.

For Gebusi, however, the story is different. A mere twenty-five years after effective first contact—and in the context of reduced rather than increased Western presence, in the era of post-colonial nationality—the Gebusi rate of sorcery plummeted and their assertion of equivalence in the reciprocal exchanges and marriages precipitously declined. This despite the fact that both Tangu and Gebusi had become increasingly fragmented and dispersed in residential terms, that the Tangu men’s clubhouse had seen the same demise as the Gebusi longhouse and initiation, and that both groups were, for what it is worth, deemed to be approximately 85% Christianized. The collectivizing institutions of Gebusi initiation, warfare, socialization, and spirituality had become moribund for both groups as people became more individuated in life roles and activities. For Gebusi in 1998, for instance, these life-courses were quite diverse, and they encompassed the possibility of becoming a church devotee, a schoolboy, a member of a sports team, or a hanger-on at the government station as well as (and more prestigious than) being a mere gardener, hunter, or traditional house-builder.

In the mix, however, and apparently much more than the Tangu of Burridge’s ethnographic present, Gebusi have accepted rather than resisted an outright hierarchy of external imposition, in place of traditional equivalences. How and why? The answers are multiple, and the details are sketched out in other recent work (Knauff

2002a; 2002c). For present purposes, we can consider two salient factors. The first concerns the history of outside intervention and the larger differences between New Guinea in the early 1950s and in the late 1990s. Among Gebusi, the impact of white colonial influence was brief—only thirteen years. It then disappeared with little expansion of economic or political impact, and no discernible Christian influence. The primary effect of colonial influence was to pacify the Gebusi's warlike neighbors, the Bedamini, and to introduce steel axes and bush knives. In their ignorance, colonial officers tacitly enabled the continuation, if not the florescence, of many Gebusi practices. Being less warriors than targets and victims of Bedamini aggression, Gebusi welcomed government intrusion more than they resisted it. If anything, they desired *more* opportunities for contact and for its anticipated benefits—economic and otherwise—than they received.

With the departure of the Australians, Papua New Guineans from other parts of the country gradually arrived to lead modern institutions in the Gebusi area: a church, school, market, sports league, and so on. Located on the expanding station of the old patrol post, these institutions became a magnet for Gebusi, many of whom moved to the edge of their territory, which abuts on the land and the airstrip of the Nomad government station. As such, they could directly engage with and participate in these institutions and activities while living on their own land.

By contrast, the longer-standing and more geographically expansive contact of Tangu with the Germans resulted in much longer-distance routes of commodity trade and plantation labor, mediated by Wanitzir, and with comparatively little presence of outside authority figures on the doorstep of Tangu itself. In contrast to Gebusi, Tangu seem to have been active and effective warriors vis-à-vis their neighbors. They were resistant to incursions by German colonial patrols into their guarded territory. As a consequence, as Burridge puts it, "Tangu gained a reputation in administrative offices for being intransigent" (1960, 130).

In the delimited context of plantation labor at the coast, Tangu learned to accept the orders and authority of others. But some Tangu men refused plantation work because of the threat to their manliness posed by passively taking orders and abuse from white overseers and Melanesian boss-boys. As Burridge puts it, "Accepting an order is a denial of manhood, submission to the breach of equivalence...Only a few Tangu are able to stomach it for long" (1960, 216). And yet, Tangu were, over time, more disposed to accept orders and authority from outsiders than they were from each other, including their own potential leaders. In the limited role of a government liaison or outsider, orders could be accepted, including by cargo prophets. But similar affronts could rarely be tolerated from other Tangu in their mere capacity as village leaders.

Differences of historical period are also relevant in explaining the divergences between Gebusi and Tangu. If outsiders resided further away from Tangu, they wielded particularly autocratic, unpredictable, and potentially pernicious influence during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The idiosyncracies of this force—colonial beatings on the plantation, unpredictable government punitive expeditions and killings, great oscillations in labor recruiting, trading practices, punishments, and the like—were magnified by different agendas, policies, and personalities among Westerners themselves, and particularly between missionaries, traders, and

colonial officers. For Gebusi, by contrast, the so-called benign or liberal Australian colonialism of the 1960s provided a context of power that was relatively predictable and less draconian—particularly for Gebusi themselves—than it had likely been for the Tangu. Moreover, the triangle of influences from the colonial state, church, and market, if not seamless, was probably less contentious or unpredictable in its articulations for Gebusi during the 1960s-1980s than it was for Tangu during the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Among Gebusi, the transition from a strategic acceptance of outside authority to its outright embracement was perhaps the biggest change that I witnessed between the early 1980s and 1998. In 1980-82, Gebusi accepted government authority but avoided it when they could. But in 1998, they not just accepted but willingly and actively sought out ways to participate as passive subordinates in institutions that subjected them to harangue and the order of external so-called enlightenment: the church, school, market, and referees on the ballfield, for hours and hours on end. Their shift appears much quicker and much more dramatic than that of Tangu, whose acceptance of outside authority appears much more ambivalent, resistant, and contextually limited (their long association with the coastal labor trade notwithstanding). Indeed, the ability of Tangu men to work on the coast may have intensified rather than undercut their sense of truculence in the ridge-top locale of their protected inland residence. As was mentioned further above, part of this difference is undoubtedly due to differences of historical period. The abilities and attractions of acting locally modern are, in relative terms, likely to be much greater for Gebusi in a post-colonial world of the 1980s and 1990s—in which local officials are themselves Papua New Guineans—than was the case in the fully and sometimes brutally colonial world of interior coastal New Guinea during the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Second, on a moral front, is the character of Christianity in each location. Though Christianity is a constant larger foil of Burridge's accounts, especially in his writings on millenarianism, we get less sense of its direct institutional impact, as a church, in Tangu itself. Though the redemptive possibilities of Christianity in a world of self-willed and authoritarian behavior are of course always present, and are alluded to in a number of Burridge's works, this is not the variety of Christianity that I found among Gebusi. In their contemporary context, the authority of God brings hierarchy and monologue at least as much as it brings equivalence, dialogue, exchange, or redemption (Knauff 2002a, chs. 5-6). This result is not inherent in Christianity *per se*, but rather to its empirical incarnation among Gebusi and a range of other Melanesian societies. The authoritative interpretation and promulgation of God's word by outside pastors is quite strong in the Gebusi area. This may also have been true among or near to the Tangu—we have little way of knowing. But at least in Burridge's published accounts, the tone of Christian redemption and the ideals of Christian equivalence ring stronger in the Melanesian world of the Tangu than they do in my experience with Gebusi.

Revivalism, orthodoxy, and the social action of evangelism are common and in some ways have always been common in Melanesian versions of Christianity (Barker 1990a; Douglas 2001; Robbins 2004; Robbins et al. 2001; Jenkins 2002; see more generally Beeman 2002). These patterns appear to be as much in conflict

as in concert with the more nuanced, loving, and thoughtful awareness of Western Christianity depicted by BurrIDGE in his 1991 book on Christian missionary endeavors. As was also the case further above, there is little way of knowing if BurrIDGE's thoughtful and philosophical exploration of the potentials of Christian equivalence have a significant or a material relation to the way Christian authority and dogma were actually represented to Tangu or actually experienced by them.

This said, it seems likely, as John Barker (pers. comm.) has suggested, that Christian churches in Melanesia have in recent decades become increasingly individualistic and attuned to a global economy and its associated values. Among Gebusi, villagers have the choice of attending at least three different churches: the Catholic, Protestant Evangelical, or Seventh Day Adventist. Among one sibling set of three true adult Gebusi brothers, each man has chosen to belong to a different church. This diversity reflects the locally modern trend for people to develop increasingly differentiated roles and choices in school, at the market, on the ballfield, in government, in church, and in an expanding array of village and station-related activities. This diversity likely contrasts with narrower institutional parameters and choices faced by Tangu during the colonial era—in church as well as in government activities and plantation labor.

Bringing these twin factors together, the confluence of an increasingly diverse moral world in a post-colonial era has combined with strong *in situ* leadership of outsiders (Papua New Guineans from other parts of the country) to skew the moral dialectic among Gebusi in a distinctive way. Change provides the Gebusi choices, but it also casts these choices in ways that presume hierarchy and subordination. Domination has become acceptable in ways it was previously not vis-à-vis values of equivalence and reciprocal exchange. For contemporary Gebusi, accepting hierarchy is seen as practically a prerequisite for pursuing, much less internalizing, a path of progress, of aspiring or achieving personal advancement along standards of contemporary economic success and modern status. This hierarchy is epitomized by the absolute power and authority of a Christian God.

Active as opposed to passive acceptance of subordination is far from general across Melanesia and is certainly not universal. In this respect, distinctive local features of Gebusi colonial and post-colonial history may be particularly important. In comparative terms, Gebusi have been quite a small and powerless group which has had little in the way of economic or political leverage. Their particular history of being subject to larger inequality if not domination—first by Bedamini and then by their “saviors,” the Australians—has predisposed them to accept and appreciate both the power of outside authority and the beneficial potentials of modern developments in their lives. In this context, the contemporary presence of post-colonial Papua New Guinea officers, teachers, and pastors, resonates with a penumbra of powerful and potentially helpful influences from a modern wider world. These histories help inform Gebusi willingness to supplant equivalence with willing subordination in the context of locally modern activities and institutions and sometimes in the social dynamics of their own settlements as well. At least during the late 1990s, this acceptance continued despite, and even because of, a general and continuing lack of external economic benefit, wage-labor, cash economy, or out-migration.

This pattern contrasts to the responses of many larger and more politically influential groups in Melanesia, and also with the Tangu. On the other side of the mountains that separate the Gebusi's lowland rainforest from the Southern Highlands, for instance, the populous Huli people appear more than dedicated to assimilate outside influence to their own cultural and moral system rather than sacrifice their own sense of historical and cultural entitlement. Cultural responses that foreground hybridization or resistance rather than capitulation to outside authority figures are legion in many parts of contemporary Melanesia.

Conclusions

If Gebusi of the 1990s and Tangu of the 1950s shade toward different ends of a moral continuum of change in Melanesia, the bulk of Melanesian societies are probably now somewhere in the middle. For sake of simplicity, I have probably overstated my case for Gebusi, who certainly retain significant aspects of subjectivity and morality that I encountered among them so strongly during the early 1980s. Reciprocally, Tangu may have changed by the 1990s in ways that make them, in selective terms, more Gebusi-like than was the case in their ethnographic present of the 1950s. However, the difference between Gebusi and Tangu responses to external and so-called modernizing influence remains substantial. Gebusi have been more wholeheartedly accepting of external change, and Tangu have been more ambivalent and resistant. This difference is thrown into yet greater relief by the very strong indigenous values of amity and equivalence in both societies, notwithstanding the many other regional and structural differences between them.

Some of the difference between Gebusi and Tangu paths of change relates to their differing historical epochs—including differences between early and high colonial versus late colonial and post-colonial circumstances. Other aspects of difference relate to very particular aspects of local history, politics, and violence in each case, including the fact that Gebusi were treated as “quiet and tractable” while Tangu were treated as aggressive and “intransigent.” Yet others relate to distinctive patterns of articulation, regularization, and sedimentation—differing paths of recursion over time through which local values interact with and refract off of external powers and values. All three of these axes seem important to consider in detail to account not just for the variation in cultural response between Gebusi and Tangu but for the very large and complex range of variation in cultural and moral change across Melanesia as a whole. In broader terms, this evokes Burridge's articulation of primary and historical dialectics in a new key—one that takes into account larger epochs of historical context, specific articulations of local morality and value, and distinctive features of authority, economy, and coercion that impinge on social life without completely determining it.

To these three axes, a fourth dimension should also be added, concerning women and gender. The unmarked frame in my depictions above, as in Burridge's work, is that of men. Equivalence and its threats are in this analysis an effectively male province. And yet, as Melanesianists have long realized, male status insecurity easily locks with cultural ideologies that exclude or disparage Melanesian women (e.g.,

Langness 1967, 1974; Read 1952; cf., Strathern 1988). In the contemporary context, the insecurities and subordinations that Melanesian men experience vis-à-vis outsiders may be displaced onto women through newly modern forms of female domination or devaluation (see Knauft 1997). At the same time that increased mobility and modern institutions such as the church, school, and market can provide new opportunities for women, they may be constrained by new strictures of gendered tradition. Relative to men, women may be restricted or confined by expectations of domesticity and moral conservatism. While men may be encouraged to take up new roles and activities, to travel and adopt new styles of commoditized life, women may be seen as big-headed or immoral for too actively pursuing these same opportunities.

In the same way that Burridge contextualizes his primary dialectic of male equivalence within a larger one of historical change and colonial development, so, too, in complementary fashion, the male drive for modern status equivalence is configured dialectically against the insecurities and strains of admitting women to this same process. Burridge mentions that Tangu women were “much as chattels” under the traditional system of bride-capture and bride-price, and that they were generally happy to see the men’s clubhouse and its customs of collective male tradition lose force (1969b, 19, 25). Later, it was Tangu men rather than women who went to work on coastal plantations and who participated most actively in the local machinations of World War Two. Little wonder then, as he notes in passing (1969b, 27n.2), that most of the regular church-goers in Tangu were women. If the tension between male and female modern equivalence is not directly addressed in Burridge’s account, their complementarity relationship would seem to constitute an additional dialectic, of gender, that twines integrally with the preliminary and the historical dialectics of morality that he exposes so effectively, and those of power and coercion that he addresses with less attention. Roughly analogous gendered patterns may be found among Gebusi, for whom the active participation of women in church and at school is complemented by, if not provocative of, male desires to be yet more locally dominant in these modern institutional contexts (Knauft 2002a, 27-29). The possibilities of modern female agency easily pose new threats to male insecurity and drive more modern aspirations for equivalence among men.

Across ranges of time and space, Melanesian societies continue to be interpretable through lenses of understanding that benefit from the analyses and insights of Kenelm Burridge. His dynamic view of moral change in Melanesia provides for comparative reflections that benefit our own developing awareness. His work provides an effective way to appreciate the core tensions of Melanesian moral and social life, and, in the process, to rethink some of our own most entrenched assumptions.

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 5

All Sides Now: The Postcolonial Triangle in Uiaku¹

John Barker

Arriving in the Maisin-speaking village of Uiaku in late November 1981 felt like stepping through a time warp: not into some primordial “tribal” world, but rather into the middle of the colonial era. My wife, Anne Marie Tietjen, and I waded ashore from our dinghy to the greetings of the staff occupying the “mission station” located in the center of the village. We sipped tea in the “rectory” as the guest of the Anglican priest, while the headmaster and teachers of the community school described the curious customs of the “villagers.” We were then led to our house, located near the edge of the large grassy expanse of the “station.” There we met the village councilor, who formally welcomed us to the community. Only after meeting these dignitaries were we invited to venture into the village proper. Three days later, the young man and woman appointed by the councilor to work as our research assistants, helpfully provided an overview of the community’s organizations, leaders, and activities. Uiaku, they pointed out, had three “sides”: the mission, represented by the priest and teachers; the government, represented by the village councilor; and the village itself, ruled by elders who enforced traditional customs.

Their description reminded me of the “Triangle” described by Kenelm Burridge in *Mambu* (1960), his classic study of cargo cults in Madang. Burridge’s colonial Triangle referred to the matrix of relationships between European agents and villagers as he observed them in the early 1950s. In the Uiaku of the early 1980s, however, the people Maisin referred to as “missionaries” were all indigenous Papua New Guineans; the rectory was a bush material house, no different from those located in the surrounding village; and the councilor answered to no European administrator.

1 This chapter has had a very long gestation, during which time I have accrued a number of intellectual debts. The first is to Ken Burridge whose writings on politico-moral change among the Tangu and Manam Islanders provide its main inspiration. I am also grateful to Robert Hefner and Bruce Knauff for helpful comments on earlier versions of this chapter and for the example of their own approaches to the complexities of moral and religious transformation. Roger Lohmann, Bob Tonkinson, and an anonymous reader’s close readings of the chapter helped to straighten out some of the kinks in my argument. Finally, my thanks to the Maisin leaders whose words appear in these pages. Your determination to care for your people and to defend their interests on the basis of consensus and the honoring of ancestral and received values in the face of momentous change stands as an example that, alas, too few others can match.

While the postcolonial Triangle in Uiaku replicated the framework of earlier colonial relationships, it was a local arrangement.

The postcolonial Triangle is by no means unique to the Maisin. One finds scattered references to similar constructions across the long-contacted lowland and island regions of Papua New Guinea and elsewhere in the Pacific Islands. Ton Otto (1992, 264), for instance, writes of how the Baluan islanders in Manus Province “divide their world into three main ways of doing things”: *kastom* (tradition), *lotu* (the church), and *gavman* (the government). A similar ideology has been reported for the Wova of Morobe, on Gawa Island in Milne Bay, for the Tolai of New Britain, and in Fiji (Flanagan 1981; Munn 1986, 43-44; Neumann 1992, 198; Ryle 2005; Tateyama 2006). Anthropologists have also documented the tendency in many groups to define the category of “custom” or “tradition” by opposing it to the broad categories of the church, government, and business (e.g., Foster 1995; Keesing 1992; Keesing and Tonkinson 1982; Lindstrom 1990). Such patterns speak to a common colonial experience in which Melanesians encountered three classes of Europeans—government agents, missionaries, and entrepreneurs—each with a distinctive (if overlapping) agenda and claim to authority. The continuing importance of colonial categories in postcolonial situations reflects their ongoing utility for political organization. It also speaks to the well-documented tendency of local Melanesian societies to formulate identity in an ongoing dialogue with external agents and agencies, particularly those associated with Europeans (Bashkow 2006; Hirsch 1990; Smith 1994).²

Most studies have tended to view such postcolonial constructions primarily in political terms: as indigenous responses to colonial incorporation and as local frameworks for contests between aspiring leaders. Burridge’s pioneering work on the colonial Triangle suggests a different although not incompatible analytic framework. The presence of powerful and comparatively wealthy Europeans in the colonial period posed an existential dilemma for local peoples in the starkest terms—by exposing their relative powerlessness and poverty, producing an intense sense of shame concerning their apparent inferiority to Europeans. While government officers and white missionaries shared much in common, each formed different types of relationships with local people. This, in turn, provided a framework that channeled and limited the responses of Melanesians who found their situation intolerable. They could attempt to withdraw back into their own traditions, counter or destroy the power of the Europeans through acts of resistance, or to form an alliance with one side in opposition to the other, or work to bring all three into balance. The colonial Triangle, in sum, defined the boundaries of the moral and political environment in which Melanesians responded to an urgent ethical dilemma (1960, 140-46).³

2 Thomas (1997, 187), for instance, observes that “the idea of community cannot exist in the absence of some externality or difference, and identities and traditions are often not simply different, but frequently constituted in opposition to others.”

3 Burridge also shows how the Triangle framed and channeled the perspectives and actions of European missionaries and government officers as well, for “relations between any two of the parties were subject to qualification by relations each had with [villagers]” (Huber 1988, 108).

By the early 1980s, the days when European patrol officers and missionaries directly intervened in village affairs lay long in the past. Still, the Triangle persisted in the ways that Maisin spoke about their community. My brief for this chapter is to explore the genesis of the postcolonial Triangle as it developed in Uiaku and its presence and functions as I observed them in the early 1980s. Taking a lead from Burridge (1960, 141), I next consider the Maisin Triangle as a “total relationship structure” whose three points exemplify morally-charged positions in tension with each other. In the final section of the chapter, I describe a contentious village meeting to show how Maisin leaders at that time pursued a strategy of melding the three positions rather than playing one off against the other.

I write in the ethnographic past tense. By the late 1990s, it was apparent that the Maisin were beginning to think of their moral and political lives in radically new terms. In an Epilogue to this essay, I briefly discuss these changes and their implications for understanding the continuing transformation of Maisin and other Melanesian’s moral orientations.

Villagers, Citizens and Christians: The Genesis of the Triangle

The Maisin are one of seven language groups making their homes in the Tufi sub-district of Oro Province. Their largest community, generally referred to as Uiaku, consists of two beach villages called Ganjiga and Uiaku, separated by a broad shallow river, stretched along about a kilometer of coastline on the southwestern corner of Collingwood Bay. The villages are further divided into named neighborhoods and patri-clan hamlets. In the early 1980s, Uiaku’s resident population numbered around 500. Another 250 or so mainly younger people were attending high school or had migrated to take up jobs elsewhere in Papua New Guinea. Far from roads and shipping lanes, the local economy depended primarily upon subsistence gardening, fishing, hunting, and gathering. Villagers also made extensive use of the surrounding bush and rainforest for building materials and canoes. While a few men occasionally made a small amount of money selling copra, the only profitable local commodity was exquisitely designed bark-cloth (“tapa”), marketed through the Anglican Church and artifact shops in Port Moresby (Barker 2007b; Hermkens 2005). Tapa sales were infrequent, however, and most families relied mainly upon remittances in cash and goods from employed relatives to supplement their subsistence activities.

The first known contacts between Europeans and the Maisin occurred during the 1890s, as the fledgling colonial administration of (then) British New Guinea and the Anglican mission gradually extended control and influence up the northern coast of the Possession to the German border (Barker 1987). The mission was the first to establish a permanent presence, building a district station at Wanigela a few kilometers north of Maisin territory in 1898. Two years later, the government set up a post at Tufi at the northern tip of Collingwood Bay and quickly brought an end to local raiding and warfare. Village constables were appointed for both Ganjiga and Uiaku, and the Maisin gradually felt the weight of the government’s ever-expanding list of ordinances meant to improve village hygiene, reduce conflict, and force villagers into the colonial commercial sector, through labor recruiting, the

imposition of a head tax in 1918, and the creation of village copra plantations. In 1902, the Anglicans acquired land at the geographical center of Uiaku and built a commodious church and school from bush materials, intending to create a new head station. The chronically understaffed and impoverished mission, however, was not able to provide a European missionary. Throughout most of the colonial period, the entire mission staff consisted of a Melanesian teacher and a few Papuan assistants visited once a month by the district priest stationed at Wanigela (Barker 2005a). Although European government agents and missionaries rarely visited and never stayed long in the Maisin villages, by the 1920s the people had become integrated into the larger colonial system. After completing a few years at the village school, young men routinely left to work for 18 month stints at plantations and mines elsewhere in Papua; people were (reluctantly) paying the government head tax with earnings or by regular work in village copra plantations; and most of the younger population had been baptized.

Through the colonial period—and, indeed, to this day—Collingwood Bay remained a backwater. The European population at its height amounted to no more than twenty or so government offices and missionaries, sometimes joined by a couple entrepreneurs, based at Tufi and Wanigela. Small as their numbers were, the Europeans made a major impression upon the Maisin. It is apparent from both archival and oral sources that villagers quickly learned to distinguish between the mission and the government. In part this had to do with the different kinds of demands missionaries and officers placed upon the people as well as the tendency of missionaries to visit more frequently, stay in the area longer, and learn at least a few Maisin words and phrases. It also had to do with the rapid changeover of government officers at Tufi and their heavy reliance upon the native police force to enforce regulations and punish miscreants with jail time. From the start, the government and mission worked to recruit Maisin directly into their organizations, as village constables and as teacher-evangelists. Over the long run, this incorporation would prove to be as important, if not more so, than direct interventions.

In the 1920s and early 1930s, the mission and government introduced a church and then a village council. These appear to have been mostly ignored by the Maisin. Following the Second World War, however, a group of young men who had served with the Australian and American troops as laborers returned to the village with a determination to embrace European ways as they understood them. Under the leadership of a charismatic mission teacher, the major factions in the community held a ceremony in which they destroyed clubs, symbolically marking the end of clan divisions, and pooled their money to form a Christian cooperative that would promote and market cash crops like copra and cocoa. The original organization soon collapsed when its leader absconded with its funds, but it was immediately replaced by a series of other associations over the next two decades. None did well financially and the movement was all but over by the early 1960s; yet by the 1980s, the cooperative movement had gained a mythological status in minds of adult Maisin. They recalled it as the moment the Maisin truly accepted Christianity, finding a solidarity that, in turn, brought a measure of prosperity and peace to the normally fractious community (Barker 1993; 1996). Most importantly, it was *their* organization, not one imposed upon them by outsiders. It represented not only a

movement towards autonomy, but towards equality with white men. The success of that golden age was symbolized in two semi-permanent buildings funded by cooperative profits: a church and a cooperative store.

At first, local government officers resisted the cooperatives, fearing they might be a nascent form of “cargo cult.” The time of patrol officers, however, was coming to an end. In the mid-1960s, the old system of village constables and annual visits of inspection by European officers was replaced by a Local Government Council based in Tufi whose members included councilors representing the interests of villages across Collingwood Bay. For a short time, the Maisin in Uiaku seem to have embraced the new government order with the enthusiasm they had earlier shown for the mission. One of the first acts of the new councilors was to ban unpenning village pigs, an edict that led to an immediate wholesale slaughter of the animals.

Local associations proliferated rapidly through the 1960s into the 1970s as the twin result of church and government initiation of new programs and the shifting of responsibility for their local organizing and financing to the community. Many of these—such as a variety of women’s groups, youth clubs, sports associations, and business initiatives—came and went, depending on interest and needs while others more closely tied directly to the local school, church or Local Government Council proved more stable. My research assistants listed six organizations when they first provided an overview of the community. Over the 20 months I lived in Uiaku, I added at least six more to my list. These included new groups, such as a tapa business group, created in response to an external grant or initiative, and organizations like the Parents and Citizen Association that, as far as I could tell, existed in name only. While the Anglican Church and various levels of government still set policy and provided some resources, such as teachers’ salaries, the local associations assumed much of the responsibility for functions that used to be handled by government officers and missionaries: law and order, promoting local economic development, paying the clergy’s salaries, and so forth.

In the early 1980s, villagers recognized three types of leaders in reference to the various activities and associations present in the community: village, mission, and government (Tietjen and Walker 1985). The first group included clan elders, particularly still-vigorous men in senior lineages, whose interests focused primarily upon the well-being of their own descent groups, kindred, and allies. Village leaders organized marriage exchanges, mortuary observances, and first born ceremonies, and took the lead in mediating land disputes and sorcery accusations. “Mission”⁴ leaders included Maisin clergy, teachers, and members of the church council and Mothers’ Union, whose responsibilities focused primarily on the upkeep of church properties, support of the clergy, promotion of Christian values, and mediation of disputes

4 Maisin referred to the Church and those associated with its work as “missionaries” even though they were not involved in proselytizing in this solidly Anglican community. It is important to keep in mind that while Maisin applied the English terms “village,” “mission,” and “government” in distinguishing types of leaders and activities, these took on their own localized meanings. For an extended discussion of the local understanding of “missionary,” see Barker (2004a).

arising between the mission staff and villagers.⁵ The category of government leader was made up of the two village councilors (for the Uiaku and Ganjiga halves of the community) and members of the village council committee, as well as the leaders of various associations sponsored in one way or another by them, such as the youth group and Tapa business group. Government leaders were expected to seek grants from government agencies, organize community work to support public projects (such as building and maintaining the medical aid post and community trade store), and deal with issues of “law and order.”

This is the scheme I encountered in Uiaku in late 1981. I soon learned, however, that there was a large gap between the system as it was supposed to work and the actuality. A few days after I arrived, a man appointed by the “government-side” leaders to be my research assistant outlined for me a calendar of routine weekly activities organized by various associations and committees. Apart from church services, regularly attended by about a third of the adults and school children, none of the work days or meetings he outlined actually took place with any regularity. All Maisin, including the leaders, spent most of their time engaged in subsistence work for their households and close kin. Some families participated in community activities only sporadically or not at all without any perceptible consequences. I found as well that leadership offices were not sharply defined. Mission and government leaders did not hesitate to involve themselves in affairs arising in both spheres and all were simultaneously respected clan leaders. Further, the actual exercise of leadership was not regularized. Individuals assumed leadership roles only sporadically, sometimes by promoting a new initiative but most often in response to some pressing need—organizing work parties for a church festival, for instance, or calling together a community meeting to deal with a sorcery case.

To sum up, over a period of some eighty years, the Triangle moved through three overlapping phases as it became increasingly localized in Maisin society. During the first phase, lasting from the establishment of colonial rule into the 1950s, the points of the Triangle were associated with distinct agencies and agendas: villagers, missionaries, and government officers. In the second phase, lasting from the Second World War to the late 1960s, Maisin experimented with new forms of community organization by borrowing upon the example and authority, in turn, of the mission and then the government in the Christian cooperative movement and the creation of the council system respectively. The final postcolonial phase brought the points of the Triangle back into balance by localizing them as types of leaders, organizations, and activities. This involved some mimicry of colonial agents and responsibilities but only a very partial acceptance of their former functions and authority. This in turn suggests that in the 1980s Triangle was far less important to Maisin as a practical form of community organization than for what it signified about their identity in postcolonial Papua New Guinea.

5 When I first worked in Uiaku, only the two church deacons were Maisin. Since the mid-1980s, Uiaku and surrounding villages have been exclusively served by Maisin priests. Most school teachers, as well, are now from Maisin villages.

Moral Authority in Public Discourse

In his study of the Triangle on Baluan, Otto (1992) discovered that the distinctions between the three domains were maintained through a process of political contest in which individuals identified themselves with one or another side and exploited the semantic and institutional contradictions between them for advantage. I saw no signs of this in Uiaku. Instead, as we shall see in the description of a village meeting below, leaders competed to demonstrate who could best reconcile differences between the village, mission, and government sides. The Baluan case raises the question of how the Maisin version of the Triangle could be sustained if it had such limited functional or political value. The answer rests with a different kind of mapping. In brief, the Triangle worked for Maisin because it corresponded to three types of identity: as tribesmen, as citizens, and as Christians. These identities, in turns, were associated with distinct moral orientations.

A palpable air of moral crisis hung over Uiaku during the 1980s. Villagers frequently complained privately and at public gatherings about their "poverty." While resentful of the government for not providing support, especially for not building a road into the area, Maisin mostly blamed themselves. Cash cropping projects never got completed, people said, because the education had made youth and younger leaders into self-promoting "big-heads"; because incessant gossiping and jealousy discouraged would-be leaders from stepping forward; because not everyone participated in the projects; because some people used the proceeds to benefit their own kin; and so forth. It seemed to many that the community was torn by conflict: there was much dark talk about rivalries and jealousy resulting in rampant sorcery. When people got together to discuss these problems, they frequently invoked better days of the past and urged one another to adhere to the values in customary practices, in church teachings, and in law and order. People sometimes opposed the values of one side to the other; some of the customs surrounding mourning, for instance, were criticized because they interfered with community projects and were, according to a few, contrary to Christian values of "love" (Barker 1985). Mostly, however, people assumed that the three types of moral authority were compatible.

Villagers could also play down the tensions between the three types of moral authority because they shared an underlying consensus concerning the basic moral rules of the society.⁶ This knowledge was largely tacit, yet all the more powerful for being left unspoken and not subject to debate. We can refer to these basic assumptions, as opposed to the more explicit positions of the Triangle, as the "moral orthodoxy." Rather than representing distinct and opposed perspectives, the positions of village, government, and mission as actually referenced in village discussions and

6 See also Anne Marie Tietjen's study of moral reasoning among Maisin leaders (Tietjen and Walker 1985). Tietjen adapted psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg's technique of analyzing subjects' responses to stories presenting moral dilemmas as a means of comparing the typical forms of moral reasoning used by the self-identified male leaders and ordinary male villagers in Uiaku. While the moral reasoning employed by leaders tended on the whole to be more community oriented than that of the ordinary villagers, she found little difference between the three types of leaders themselves. Tietjen's innovative study provides independent support for my contention that the leaders drew from a common pool of basic moral assumptions.

debates amounted to variations on a theme. Before turning to an example of a village meeting, it will be helpful to outline first the moral orthodoxy and the ways that it was reformulated within the framework of the Triangle.

Moral Orthodoxy

The most common moral ideal against which behavior was judged in Uiaku was contained in the term *marawa-wawe*, which we can roughly translate as “amity.” The literal translation is something like “guts (emotions) that are given,” suggesting a state where people have reached commensality through perfectly balanced exchanges. This notion of amity as “existential equivalence,” to use Knauft’s phrase (Chapter Four), appears to be very common both in “traditional” settings (Burridge 1960; 1969b; Knauft 1985; Schwimmer 1973) and new ones in Melanesia (see, e.g., Errington and Gewertz, Chapter Six). Maisin moral discourse, however, placed an equally strong emphasis on relationships characterized by asymmetrical exchanges and hierarchy, captured by the term *muan*, “respect.” The primary example was the relationship between a parent and a child. At birth, infants lacked “sense and ability” (*mon seramon*). Their parents “took care” (*kaifi*) of them by feeding them, curbing their passions and developing their social abilities through example, encouraging talk, and mild punishment. In turn, children as they grew up were expected to assist those who cared for them with contributions of labor, food and, if they secured jobs, money and goods. Other relationships marked by asymmetrical exchanges followed the same logic. Thus older siblings, the heads of senior lineages, and one’s parents-in-law were understood as “taking care” of younger siblings, junior lineage heads and the spouses of their children and thus entitled to support from them.

Strictly speaking, the relationship of *marawa-wawe*, based upon generalized or balanced reciprocity, applied only to persons who occupied equivalent positions in the social structure: affines of the same generation and sex, cross-cousins, the heads of lineages in unrelated clans, and so forth. Still, Maisin spoke of the series of exchanges triggered by marriage, through the puberty ceremony for first born children and culminating in death, as converting a *muan* relationship into one based on equivalence. In general, people assumed that the social order depended upon a balancing of “respect” and “amity,” of hierarchy and equivalence.

The moral orthodoxy was confirmed not so much in positive statements as in criticisms of those who breached the norms (Barker 1989; 1990b). Not meeting one’s obligations by, for instance, refusing to share betelnut with an equal or failing to help in one’s father-in-law’s garden when requested might be understood as a “mistake” (*da*) and subject to sanctions ranging from gossip and chiding to (alleged) sorcery attacks. The rare person who persisted in immoral acts—keeping to themselves, getting into quarrels with kin and refusing to engage in exchanges—raised suspicions that they were themselves sorcerers. The ambiguous status of the person who breached morality was best captured in the epithet *dagari*, which describes a person who is both selfish (non-reciprocal) and crippled (the victim of sorcery retaliation).

Moral Positioning in the Triangle

The distinctions between village, government, and mission allowed speakers at community meetings to finesse the moral orthodoxy in reference to various concerns and problems. Appeals to village tradition came closest to confirming the orthodoxy as it was experienced in daily life. Such appeals focused upon the roles of clan leaders as remembered in oral traditions. Maisin distinguished between two types of patrilineal clans: high ranking *kawo* and lower ranking *sabu* (Barker 2005b). The members of *sabu* clans were characterized as hot-headed and impetuous. As fierce warriors, their defining symbol was the spear. The *kawo* clans had the drum as their key symbol, which marked their prerogative to host feasts and dances on the plaza before their houses. Members of *sabu* clans were supposed to show “respect” towards their *kawo* by aiding them in their endeavors, especially by providing labor and food and dancing during feasts. In return, the *kawo* “took care” of their *sabu* by giving them advice to cool their tempers and directing their energies towards goals that benefited their alliance, whether in competitive feasts with rivals, warfare and raids or migrating to new villages. The leaders of *kawo* clans, who Maisin often called by the English word “chief,” held the singular right to speak publicly at gatherings. Commanding the respect of their *sabu* “brothers,” the *kawo* sought to create alliances with other *kawo* clans: to extend the condition of social amity, *marawa-wawe*, through exchanges of food, celebrations, and spouses. Maisin sometimes thus referred to the *kawo* leaders as “peace-makers”.⁷ The complementary roles of the *kawo* and *sabu* thus presented the idealized picture of balance between symmetrical and asymmetrical exchange, between equivalence and hierarchy, contributing to a general state of amity.

Any evocation of the *kawo* and *sabu* leaders, however, was bound to remind the audience of ancient rivalries and conflicts between factions in the community. The Maisin never possessed anything like a paramount chief and oral traditions included often-told stories of internal conflicts and acts of treachery. On top of this, while Maisin took a general pride in their ancestral traditions, the particulars of different clans’ claims to land, ritual prerogatives, and histories was a source of continuing dissention within the community. An appeal just to the authority of the “chiefs” on its own would be just as likely to create problems as to suggest solutions.

Appealing to government or mission authority had the advantage of transcending local political divisions. Following Hefner, we should picture the government and mission sides as artifacts of “a kind of secondary community built above and between those given by local social circumstances” (1987: 75). Local circumstances still remained paramount, but the rhetoric associated with government edicts or heard in sermons provided alternate ways of framing and presenting the ideal relationship between hierarchy and equivalence, primarily by downplaying or obscuring the mechanisms of exchange and portraying social amity as deriving directly from

7 Similar leadership systems distinguishing between “war” and “peace” leaders have been reported over a broad range of lowland Papua New Guinea (Chowning 1979). The Maisin system resembles those of its neighbors in Collingwood Bay (Barker 2005b; Gneccchi-Ruscione 1991).

respect of authority. Because they referred to different types of authority, the picture local mission and government leaders provided of the nature of amity was also distinctive.

Speakers referencing the “government” located authority in national laws and legal proceedings. Those adopting this rhetoric did not elaborate on the nature of this authority or why it should be respected, beyond the ultimate and rarely used sanction of inviting the police stationed at Tufi to intervene in a conflict.⁸ Instead they tended to focus on the benefits that would be achieved if everyone followed a clear set of rationalized rules both to promote the economic health of the community and to deter conflict. The overview of community organizations I was given at the start of my fieldwork is a good representation of this kind of thinking. By appealing to government authority, speakers at community meetings evoked a constitutional notion of amity, one that stressed organized activity based upon a respect for the “law.”

Speakers referencing the “mission” located authority in the teachings of the Anglican Church and, ultimately, the Christian god. Mission rhetoric, like that referencing the government, strongly implied obedience. This had much to do with the hierarchical structure of the Church, which was strongly Anglo-Catholic in orientation. All church services proceeded according to a modified version of the *Book of Common Prayer* and all clergy and lay evangelists were licensed and served at the pleasure of the Bishop. Many Maisin conceived of their collective relationship with the Church as a kind of exchange. Villagers gave the clergy (and God) gifts of support including food, labor, regular attendance of church services and obedience of church moral edicts. In return for their obedience, Maisin hoped for unity and material prosperity. The heady period of the Christian cooperatives, when the first iron-roofed church was built, was often referenced as a time of such unity. By appealing to mission authority, speakers at community meetings evoked a communal sense of amity, one that stressed unity based upon a common adherence to the Church.

A Meeting: Finding Common Ground

As I mentioned earlier, the residents of Uiaku were deeply concerned by what they perceived as signs of moral decay. Deaths, garden failures, quarrels over land or the challenges of keeping the shelves of the community store stocked with goods sent people muttering about the “big-headedness” of the young, the havoc caused by jealousy and gossiping, and the threat of invisible sorcerers. Private worries often broke out into the open when people gathered to mourn a death or share a meal following Sunday service. On occasion, the difficulties seemed so pressing that one of the leaders, usually a village councilor, called for a community meeting. These were always very well attended, usually lasting from mid-day until dusk. Most occurred

8 This was not a very compelling sanction in any case as the police at Tufi rarely had the petrol that would allow them to make the trip to Uiaku and back. For a vivid account of the disintegration of the police force in rural areas, especially those off the road system, see Knauff (2002a).

on the neutral grounds of the mission station. Mature and senior men sat with each other on a shelter platform with younger men, women and children sitting below on the ground, wherever they could find shade. Speakers in the shelter monopolized the talk. While some issues might provoke a short debate, most talk took the form of speeches. Each speaker gave his overview of the situation in question and what should be done. At a successful meeting, enough people had said the same thing to leave the assembled satisfied that there was a consensus.

On the 28th of June in 1983, the Uiaku councilor called a meeting. The purpose was to discuss the floundering operation of the village cooperative store, the last remaining legacy of the cooperative movement that had started more than forty years earlier. Although little more than a hut on high posts, the store was one of the few buildings in the area built almost entirely of imported materials: expensive finished wood flooring and iron sheeting for the walls and roof. As a sign of their modernity, it gave Maisin enormous pride. Yet it was also a constant cause for concern. The store was supposed to earn a profit that could be used for other local projects. Yet no matter how high the managers jacked up prices for supplies of rice, matches, kerosene, and other basic goods, the store steadily lost money and much of the time remained closed. The Uiaku councilor was a middle-aged man who had worked for some years in the cooperative development office of the former colonial government. When he took an early retirement to return to the village and care for his aging parents, he took a personal interest in the cooperative store and had made its success one of his top priorities upon becoming councilor.

The meeting took place in the midst of the festering conflict between Uiaku and Ganjiga following the beating of a boy caught in the act of visiting or possibly attempting to rape a girl living in Uiaku. Some of the boy's relatives in Ganjiga retaliated by attempting to sink the canoe of an elder from the girl's clan. The Ganjiga councilor was quietly negotiating a food exchange to end the crisis when the police arrived to remove the boy to the Tufi jail at the request of the Uiaku councilor. The conflict between the councilors spilled over into the management of the cooperative store, to which both men had keys. Checking the books one day, the Uiaku councilor was alarmed to find that Ganjiga customers were receiving a dangerous amount of credit. To prevent further depletion of the stock, he changed the lock and called for a meeting. It occurred the next day in a cleared area in front of the store. Most Ganjiga people, including the councilor, stayed away. While the focus of the meeting was the cooperative store, talk inevitably spilled over to the festering bad feelings between the two villages and their respective councilors.

During the 18 months I had lived in Uiaku, I had heard a great deal of talk about the store, both in casual conversations and in meetings like this one. It was quite clear that people saw it as something more than a convenient place to shop. Much more. To begin with, villagers often spoke as if the cooperative store were the only possible economic option open to them. When I would remind them of tapa sales or remittances from working relatives, they readily agreed that these were important sources of money...and then the talk would return to the cooperative store and its troubles. That talk entailed intense criticism: of the young men who operated the store, of the councilors who managed the books, and of the villagers who depended upon the goods sold there. When I mentioned the practical difficulties of running

any business in a remote village like Uiaku, people again readily agreed. They were keenly aware of their isolation from markets, of unreliable transportation and the very high prices charged by coastal boats when they did show up. These obstacles, after all, had defeated a long string of cash crops from the 1940s to the present. Yet, again, talk easily slid back to self-criticism.

I was fascinated by the quality of the talk. It closely resembled that I heard privately and at meetings concerning sorcery, following the same basic logic. Villagers had an emotional investment in that small steel shack. Like the body of a loved one, its health reflected the degree of solidarity in the surrounding society.⁹ People spoke nostalgically of earlier days when people worked closely together, church services were well-attended and everyone pitched in to make formal exchanges exciting and successful. The floundering cooperative society of the present represented not simply an economic failure but a moral one. It was an outward sign of inward divisions: of rivalries, gossip, greed, and other weaknesses. Much of the time at meetings was, in fact, taken up in condemnations of such moral failings.

The meeting of June 28th was typical in this respect, if somewhat more intense than usual because of the tensions between the two villages. Speaker after speaker denounced the social divisions they saw undermining both the store's and community's well being. While some of the talk became heated, as we'll see below, the speakers worked hard at finding a point of consensus: not just to defuse the tensions or plan future actions, but more basically to restore the condition of social amity that Maisin assumed was a necessary condition for prosperity. The politics of consensus, as reflected in their speeches, relied on a strategy of blending of the three orientations to community discussed earlier in this chapter: that is, by appealing to listeners as fellow villagers, as citizens, and as Christians.

Near the beginning of this meeting, a man who had served as the first storeman in 1965 reminded villagers of the history of the cooperative:

Our traditions say we must listen to what elders say and do it. Do it! Do it! The ancestors who came here worked together and made Uiaku's name good. But these young ones have not left it in good shape. The ancestors brought their traditions (*kawo*). They were strong and fought a lot. When the missionaries came, they gave their traditions to God. They gave everything. That was a sign that they retain the traditions. The young ones are growing and we need to teach them what our ancestors did. If you elders had died and we spoil [the cooperative], it would only be our fault. But I am unhappy that you have to see what is happening...Use your good sense (*mon seramon*)! God told us that things will happen. The strong wind will blow. The famine will come. If the flood must come to spoil the village, it will. If the fight comes, it will. We will argue and stay apart from each other. We know these things happen. So when someone does something bad, don't talk about it. We are Christians, so we shouldn't gossip. When we do bad things, we must go straight to that person and make amends (*marawa-wawe*).

Teach the young ones to speak Maisin properly so they won't get confused when they make speeches. Don't let them spoil this building you started. My fathers, you made this

9 Indeed, at one meeting, a senior man proclaimed that the Society store was "sick," a condition he attributed to the incessant gossiping and sniping around the village about the storemen.

building for us. We have intelligence (*mon seramon*) and education, so must look after it. Now it is not only the *kawo* (leaders of the high-ranking clans) who talk. The spear *sabu* (leaders of the low-ranking clans) may talk. You went to the big schools, so you may talk. All the *kawo* must help each other and work together. I shouldn't say this, but I'm sad so I am reminding you. We should not forget these things. So my talk is finished.

The references in this brief speech were well-known to the audience. The speaker began by reminding them of the consecration of the permanent church in 1962. Before the Bishop had arrived, leaders of local clans surrounded the church on three sides with totemic emblems (*kawo*) representing their clans—branches of different trees arranged in a crisscrossed fence called an *oraa*. The clans thus symbolized their new Christian unity and their enduring traditions by having both included in the Bishop's blessing of the village church (Barker 1993). Around the same time, individuals (who were in 1983 the elders) gave money to initiate the cooperative store. The speaker next asserted that God will send disasters to test the people.¹⁰ As Christians, the people must resist the urge to quarrel; they must make peace with each other. The main thrust of his speech came at the end. Uiaku has become a new kind of place where clan leaders should cooperate instead of competing. Today, education and experience count as much as clan status in establishing leadership.

Other men echoed these sentiments and built upon them. The Uiaku councilor then stood up, pointing out that he was not a member of a high ranked clans (*kawo*) but belonged to a subservient one (*sabu*) and thus in the old days would not have been allowed to talk. However, "I have been elected as councilor, so I look after this place. We are all like that; when we have responsibility for the church or government-sides, we must do our work." Turning to the problem at hand, he said:

GC [the Ganjiga councilor] says that I went over him. How? Ganjiga people did not tell me what to do. The trouble was in my Ward so I wrote the note and sent it to [the police]... If this problem goes on all will be spoiled! If we solve it, all will be well. GC says I went over him. I have that right on the Government-side, so he shouldn't complain. I don't like how my mother's brother¹¹ has responded to this. We are adults. We are no longer small boys! We mustn't act like that when we are men and spoil things. We must only do good. That's why I put a lock...As a man representing the government I have the right to do it! I am the only one. Don't talk about my children or my wives.¹² I am the councilor and you should come straight to me.

The councilor claimed a special, governmental authority in this speech. Mission and government leaders should work towards village cooperation and unity; to do so they must sometimes make independent decisions for the good of the village. It is inappropriate to gossip about their kin, as one might about a traditional village leader, because they act on a higher authority—that of the central government and its

10 A few months earlier, a flash flood had undermined many of the houses in part of the village.

11 The Ganjiga councilor was a classificatory mother's brother to the speaker.

12 The Uiaku councilor had two wives, the Ganjiga councilor had three. The allusion here is to sorcerers, who were known to thrive upon rumor-mongering and gossip.

laws from outside of the village. If people want to complain about how government-side leaders are doing their job they should confront them directly.

The Uiaku councilor, however, did not argue that government rules must replace traditional values and institutions. Later in his speech, he suggested that village and government leadership should work hand-in-hand, especially when they are shared in the same person. He argued that GC failed to act when feelings began to be worked up over the tryst between the Ganjiga boy and Uiaku girl:

GC was here when that happened. He is *kawo*, so he should have taken his string bag across [i.e., gone to Uiaku with gifts and sat down in a friendly manner with the aggrieved parents...What was he doing? He was there when it happened. He is a *kawo* man and a councilor. If he had solved this problem, these rumors would not go around. It is spoilt because one person is playing. When you split up you will fight with spears again, and it is one person's fault.

In other words, as a traditional village leader, GC had the responsibility and authority to keep order among his people. Because he did not act quickly enough, the conflict spread. By implication, the Uiaku councilor said that he had no choice but to call in the police because villagers themselves could no longer contain the violence.

Both of these speakers affirmed a government-side notion of the village as a single polity under the constituted rule of the councilors and “educated men.” They also expressed ambivalent assessments of Maisin traditions and of the changes the community had experienced. Beneath these similarities, however, were differences in emphasis and nuance reflecting each man's political situation and personal experience. The first speaker was a founder of the cooperative store and one of the first storemen, but he had long before withdrawn from direct participation in the running of the business.¹³ His speech begins with an allusion to the conversion of the Maisin, to their movement from division and fighting to unity and peace under God. The provision of Western education and other changes have further undermined divisions: all may now talk openly, all should work together. Nevertheless, he asserts that these innovations are based upon the work of the ancestors and village values. By not respecting the elders and traditions, the young people are abusing their new freedoms and thus undoing the good work of those who established the store. The speaker thus implied that it is the younger men who are undermining the store and causing trouble in the community. The criticism was directed towards the Ganjiga councilor, but it could have just as easily been addressed to his Uiaku counterpart. Village values form the touchstone in this imagined social order.

The Uiaku councilor had quite different concerns. His actions had contributed to divisions within the community and much of the thrust of his speech was to justify them. His speech strongly attacked the Ganjiga councilor in personal terms, referring to him as “childish” and disrespectful of the peace-making role of senior *kawo* clans. The touchstone here, however, is clearly government-side values. The

13 It is of interest to note that this speaker and both of the councilors came from similar backgrounds. All had been in the first cohort of Maisin boys to attend high school and all were about the same age. Only the Uiaku councilor, however, had taken up (and later left) a career outside of the village.

councilor attempted to legitimate his role as a representative of the government who maintains law and order in the village. He presented village values positively as the first resort for keeping peace. Yet misplaced egalitarianism and gossip may also generate dissension. Distancing himself from the village order, the councilor warned darkly that the community could go back to the bad old days when “you will fight with spears again.”

These two speakers, like others I heard, accepted that Uiaku (including Ganjiga) needed to unite if there were to be any hope of material advancement. All villagers needed to work together. All three of the discourses offered alternate conceptions of moral unity and cooperative labor, whether based upon village traditions, the love of God, or the rule of the law. As we see in the words of the two speakers above, leaders worked hard to merge the three discourses but leaned, often subtly, toward one side or another.

Conclusion

In *Mambu*, BurrIDGE introduced the concept of the colonial Triangle as a convenient shorthand for making sense of the political situation faced by local Melanesians and the moral challenges and solutions it posed for them. My argument in this chapter is that in the late colonial period the Maisin appropriated the Triangle and made it their own. The social ideology of the three “sides” was good to organize with, providing a simple model that located people’s pluralistic identity in certain exemplary activities, situations, and leadership roles. The Triangle, however, was even better to *moralize* with. The most compelling speakers at community meetings were masters at moral triangulation, drawing upon the authority of tradition, the law, and Christianity to critique the community and promote solutions.

Anthropologists working across Melanesia from the late colonial period into the 1980s noted similar constructions. The tendency has been to stress the oppositional aspects of categories like *kastom*, Christianity or state law. In a few cases, most prominently the Kwaio of Malaita, such oppositions have served to generate separatism: “traditionalists” arrayed against Christians (Keesing 1992; cf. Lattas 1998). But this kind of hard division has rarely lasted long elsewhere in Oceania; the long-term tendency has in most places been to accept, adjust and modify colonial introductions rather than to reject them outright. The processes of opposition have tended to be located within communities, with people defining tradition against, for instance, what they know and have experienced of Christianity. The categories may be exploited politically and encourage factionalism, especially where several churches, political organizations or types of businesses are present. But even so, the opposed categories have been largely understood as a dynamic source of creative innovation as Melanesians find or construct, affirm or “invent” their identities in changing circumstances.

This chapter has attended to a facet of the Triangle and similar constructions that has not received nearly as much attention: the combined role of both indigenous and introduced agencies in enforcing convention rather than innovation. I rarely heard Maisin speak of the village, government, and mission as opposed in any way to

one another and then only in reference to very specific issues. By and large, people did not see the sides as being in opposition; instead they were compartmentalized. This was most striking in the case of the church where the clergy—even the Maisin ones—conducted services largely in a language (English) that at least half of their congregation barely understood and with a liturgy that made virtually no acknowledgement of the local setting. No one but me saw anything odd in this. By the same token, Maisin did not object to the councilors calling meetings or going to the police when very serious violence took place. This compartmentalization may well have strengthened the appeal of the law and Christianity as sources of moral authority compatible with tradition in village meetings. While the different sides implied different takes on moral issues, they were applied together in village meetings expressly in support of what I have termed the moral orthodoxy. Maisin took as a given that problems in the community arose from within, through the failings of its own residents. Other factors were left unmentioned and unappreciated. The enormous drain of young people from the community leaving for school and jobs elsewhere had clearly affected the ability of villagers to meet exchange obligations and undertake large community projects, for instance. This was never acknowledged. The collective value of amity remained paramount and the responsibility for its maintenance rested squarely on the shoulders of local villagers.

The moral orthodoxy found its grounding in the everyday practices of exchange within networks of kin and affinal relationships. All the same, the moral orthodoxy was not primordial but instead the product of a long history of interaction between Maisin and outsiders. The successive colonial regimes in Papua certainly challenged the Maisin in many ways, but the thrust of most policies well into the late colonial period favored the protection and strengthening of village societies, often at the expense of promoting individual entrepreneurship. The Anglican missionaries went further, practically making a fetish out of village society which they romantically imaged as the home of communal values that had characterized the medieval church (Wetherell 1977). The government and mission understandings of village society were very different from those held by the Maisin in the early years of contact, but they were strongly collectivist and contributed over time to a notion of the village as the key moral community (Barker 1996). While the ancestors of the Maisin almost certainly shared many of the values of villagers in the 1980s, they would have seen the obligations of respect and equivalence as entirely relational, based upon exchanges. The advent of Christianity and government law made it possible to expand these categories by engaging Maisin in higher level “secondary communities” that transcended immediate relationships.

Epilogue

In 1997, I returned to Uiaku after a ten year absence. The village looked much the same, but the population had increased dramatically. Many migrants had returned home and a much larger group of young people unable to find employment in the declining national economy had elected to stay put. While community meetings still occurred, it was clear that the rhetoric of the Triangle no longer sufficed to deal with

the complexities of village life. People now spoke of the government as an outside entity opposed to their interests (although this did not stop five Maisin from running in the national election that year). A number of families had left the Anglican Church to join a Pentecostal sect, the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Jehovah's Witnesses. While there was less religious unity, participation in Christian services, including the Anglican Church, was more active and enthusiastic than previously. At the same time, villagers also spoke much more frequently and with evident pride about their ancestral traditions, especially their ancient reputation as fierce warriors. While gossip and backbiting was as incessant as ever, I heard less talk about sorcery and moral decay. Maisin still grumbled about the lack of opportunities to earn money locally, but there were more individual entrepreneurs running trade shops, boat services, and planting cash crops than before and little talk of collective economic projects.

The immediate cause of these changes was a decision by the Maisin in the mid-1990s to prevent commercial logging on their ancestral lands. Their campaign attracted the support of many environmental organizations, leading to an influx of visitors and enlarging opportunities for villagers to travel outside the country and to earn money (Barker 2004a; 2007a). More generally, however, the changes that led to the disappearance of the Triangle as an ideology in Uiaku should be attributed to a shift in both the political and moral economy of Papua New Guinea since Independence. The years since 1975 have witnessed a rapid decline in the presence of the government in most rural areas and the erosion of programs and protections strengthening the collective aspirations and rights of local villagers. In many areas, people are encountering a much wider array of influences than twenty years ago, opening up new possibilities for individual choice and local variation. Even in remote areas where contact with outsiders is very restricted, people are exposed to more individualized versions of political and religious ideologies than was the case in the past.

As Knauff observes in Chapter Four of this volume, Melanesian communities have responded to the challenges posed by agents of church, state, and commerce in ways ranging from capitulation to rejection. Still, it is critical to recognize that the type of challenge presented to local people has itself changed over time. Many Maisin today are happily subordinating themselves to enthusiastic versions of Christianity that emphasize the salvation of individuals rather than communities (Barker 2003; 2007). Many who have returned from town feel comfortable displaying their relative wealth in valuable commodities like generators or motorboats without feeling an obligation to share. The early conversion of the Maisin required them to give up practices like cannibalism and the torture of widows but reinforced a sense of collective morality. They like many other Melanesians are now experiencing a second conversion towards a more individualized ethic, leaving less space for the collectivist values of the postcolonial Triangle.

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 6

Reconfiguring Amity at Ramu Sugar Limited

Frederick Errington and Deborah Gewertz

One of Kenelm Burridge's most enduring insights into Papua New Guinea sociality concerned the significance of achieving an amity based on moral relationships of mutual equivalence. Thus, in *Mambu*, he wrote concerning the Tangu he knew in the early 1950s:

All Tangu, howsoever related, assent to the notion of amity. Amity exists within its own moral right: it is the critical norm by which all relationships are judged, and with which all relationships should coincide or approximate...The breach of amity immediately sets in motion procedures designed to ensure a return to amity. As a result, in action on the ground, amity entails relationships shifting until the mutual obligations contained within them can approximate at least to an overt conformity with amity...

Amity is itself most significantly manifested in the idea of equivalence; in the idea that individuals are in a state of moral equality, one human being, as a whole, being neither morally worse nor morally better than another. Amity is a function of equivalence: through equivalence the most perfect kind of amity may be found. In action, equivalence, and therefore amity, finds primary expression in formal exchanges of foodstuffs, whether they are between individuals, or groups of households (Burridge 1960, 17).

And, as Burridge amply showed, given the tangle of relationships that constituted Tangu sociality, controversies concerning who owed what to whom and why were not only common, but ramified widely and intricately. Indeed, amity was far from a steady state and much of Tangu social life could be seen as focused on claims and counter-claims concerning whether or not it had been fulfilled or breached, and, if so or if not, what should be done. Such wranglings, especially in their more intense forms as they became "disputes," embodied for villagers—and, in particularly illuminating ways, for their anthropologist(s)—what was at stake in Tangu life.

At stake was the performance of a sociality of a particular sort—what we have elsewhere termed "commotion" (Gewertz and Errington 2002). This sociality was predicated upon on-going and self-assertive engagements: one in which people compelled each other into active participation in each other's pasts, presents and futures. In such a sociality, morality or amorality could be measured by one's willingness to recognize or repudiate another as worthy—as efficacious—players in the same game. Such recognition or repudiation was, in essence, an affirmation or a denial of agency—indeed, of the capacity to effect history (cf. Strathern 1992).

And it was such a profound repudiation—such a seemingly absolute denial by whites (mostly Australians) of the efficacy and worth of Papua New Guineans—that profoundly irked, baffled and frustrated those among whom Burridge worked—hurtling them into a range of activities, including, of course, cargo cults.¹

Most anthropologists working in present-day Papua New Guinean villages, some fifty years after Burridge's first fieldwork, would recognize the persistence and generality of these Tangu themes that Burridge has set out so gracefully and compellingly, with such ethnographic and moral insight. They would recognize the extent to which ideas focusing on mutual recognition of worth—of amity, equivalence, engagement, agency—have remained significant to visions of sociality among contemporary Papua New Guineans. Certainly, we have continued to find “Tangu-kinds” of engagements—commotions—in our work among the Chambri, both in their home villages and in their village-like squatter settlement. Thus, three brief examples:

1. Very late one night in 1994 our old Chambri friend, Godfried Kolly, eventually opened the door of his squatter-settlement house in Wewak's Chambri Camp in response to a Chambri drunk. The drunk had been raucously noisy for hours, keeping everyone awake. At first Godfried responded to his pounding on the door, demanding access to Godfried's store of beer, by shouting for him to go away. But, as soon as the man reminded Godfried of their specific though (quite) distant kin relationship, the door was opened and beer provided.
2. While acting as sponsors of a ceremony at Indingai (one of the Chambri home villages) during 1999, we were plunged into a protracted discussion of ritual protocol and of the relative priority of various ancestral presences. However, since we viewed the occasion as a solemn ceremony of commemoration—and since our time was short but our money, not—we decided to cut through what we saw as the self-assertion typical of Chambri male politics: we decided to pay whatever it took to get matters back on track. However, it soon became clear that such events of controversy and contention were not just a predictable distraction from the ritual's objective. They were central to it. In fact, one of our friends shook his head with frustration at our lack of appreciation of the spirit of the ritual, telling us that we had killed them all (that we had stopped them all dead) with our money.
3. During 1999, while we were attending an evangelical service at Indingai, an emotionally exultant preacher insisted to us that our presence meant that we were all equal in God's eyes: that God loved all of his children—both black and white—and that we would all end up in heaven one happy day.

There is no doubt, we think, that such contemporary attempts to achieve amity through claims—and counter-claims—would be intelligible to Burridge's Tangu. However, there is also no doubt that these contemporary commotions intimate that important shifts have been underway. Although Burridge's Tangu were already, to

1 We allude here to “In the Memory of W. B. Yeats,” a poem in which W. H. Auden eulogizes: “Mad Ireland hurt you in poetry” (1940).

some extent, influenced by urban migration, commodities, cash, Christianity and English-based forms of education, these forces and processes were to become increasingly significant in succeeding years. Indeed, these forces and processes were to shape in important ways an emergent system of *incommensurate* differences, largely cash- if not class-based.² These differences, by their nature, were—as BurrIDGE clearly recognized—reconfiguring the system of moral equivalence. (See particularly, BurrIDGE’s discussion of the effect of money on social relations.³) They were redefining who could make what claims on whom. In fact, they were leading to a reconsideration of whether and under what conditions amity would be even feasible and desirable.

In the pages that follow, we trace out this reconfiguration with reference to several sociality-revealing wrangles—indeed, disputes—that took place at Ramu Sugar Limited (RSL), a modernist enterprise considerably different from both Tangu and Chambri villages. (For a social history of RSL, see Errington and Gewertz 2004) As we shall see, at RSL, much of the rhetoric of amity and equivalence persisted. Nonetheless, as claims and counter-claims played out, self-assertions were shifting into shake-downs, if not extortions; concerns with engagement were moving into preoccupations with liability. In fact, claims for equivalence were leading to terminations of social relations. It was, in effect, as Sahlin (1981; 1985) has described for another Pacific area, that structures were transforming, connotations were shifting.

First some background.

Ramu Sugar Limited

Brought into existence in the late 1970s in a remote part of Papua New Guinea, RSL was an embodiment of imported industrial production. Its Dickensian, smoke-belching, steam-shrieking factory and vast fields of carefully tended sugar cane contrasted sharply with the surrounding grassland, punctuated only by an occasional village. RSL became not only an immense physical fact, but an immense social fact: it not only dominated and organized the landscape, it also shaped—and was shaped by—the consciousness of those culturally diverse thousands who left their homes to live and work there.⁴

RSL was, moreover, built to be a centerpiece in newly independent Papua New Guinea’s development efforts. Achieving Independence in 1975, relatively late in

2 We have described commensurate differences as difference in degree and incommensurate differences as differences in kind (Gewertz and Errington 1991). Money (and presumably other items) could be used to establish and demarcate either sort of difference. However, at a certain point, having *more* money than others might come to mark one as a significantly *different* kind of person than others, as we illustrate in (Gewertz and Errington 1999).

3 See especially BurrIDGE (1969a, 41-46).

4 We use the past tense (or variants of it) whenever possible in this chapter to convey the idea that events have taken place in particular historical contexts—not in some timeless state, in some “ethnographic present.”

world history,⁵ Papua New Guinea urgently wanted to develop and to avoid the mistakes in development made by other former colonies. It wanted to catch up and to learn from the errors of the rest. Created as both a grand project and a private, for-profit enterprise, RSL became a major—although often contested—component of these endeavors. Significantly, it was to be unlike sugar operations elsewhere, rooted as they usually were in a grim colonial past.⁶ It was, instead, supposed to bring enlightened capitalist prosperity—good wages, technical skills and a modern infrastructure—to transform a region deemed remote, underpopulated and underutilized. Furthermore, it was to benefit the entire country.

RSL was also seen as bringing national self-sufficiency in a major commodity. Indeed, sugar, with such other imports as rice and canned mackerel, was already becoming central to the diet of Papua New Guinea's swelling urban population. Moreover, self-sufficiency in sugar would also have important symbolic value: it would be a particularly appropriate assertion of national will. After all, sugar had originally been domesticated in Papua New Guinea (some 8,000 years ago). Furthermore, sugar was a major export of Australia. And Australia, it was thought, had protected its overseas market by stifling the development of a sugar industry in its (now former) *de facto* Papua New Guinea colony. It was not surprising, therefore, that for advice concerning the creation of its sugar industry, Papua New Guinea sought out not an Australian-based firm, but a British-based one. They chose Booker Agriculture International (BAI), a company with much experience in establishing plantations in developing countries. BAI—and, in its later form, Booker Tate Limited (BTL)—would eventually help establish RSL and provide its corporate managers.

RSL thus became a Papua New Guinean, agro-industrial sugar complex, staffed by thousands of Papua New Guinean “nationals” from all over the country as well as by “expatriates” from many parts of the world.⁷ What came into being was both

5 As of 1886, the northern half of what became the country of Papua New Guinea was a colony of Germany and the southern half, of Britain. In 1921, after World War One, the northern half—New Guinea—came under Australian administration, first, as a League of Nations Mandated Territory and, then, as a United Nations Trust Territory. In 1906, the southern half—Papua—though still formally controlled by Britain, also came under Australian administration. The two territories—New Guinea and Papua—were administered separately by Australia until 1942. Subsequently, Australia brought both under a single administration (although the United Nations retained some responsibility for the New Guinea portion). This condition prevailed until Papua New Guinea's Independence as a single nation in 1975.

6 For an excellent analysis of the local impact of sugar operations under post-colonial, albeit equally grim, circumstances, see Scheper-Hughes (1992).

7 Of the 668 permanent employees working at RSL during 2000, about 40 percent came from the three provinces nearest to RSL: sixty-nine from Madang; one hundred and eighteen from Morobe; and seventy-eight from Eastern Highlands. But, there were permanent workers from all of the country's provinces, with the exception of Western: twenty-one from Central; thirty from East New Britain; sixty-one from East Sepik; forty-three from Enga; ten from Gulf; twenty-three from Manus; eleven from Milne Bay; four from New Ireland; nine from North Solomons; eleven from Oro; seventeen from Sandaun; seventy-five from Simbu; twenty-nine from Southern Highlands; thirty-six from Western Highlands; nine from West New Britain; and one whose province of origin we do not know. In addition, there were thirteen permanently employed expatriates: four Australians; five Britons; two Fijian-Indian-

impressive and complex.⁸ Certainly, for the Papua New Guineans who have lived and worked there, RSL became a big deal.

At RSL, culturally diverse Papua New Guineans, with their nuclear families and neighbors, came to live in a secure, comfortable and regulated company town. It was a gated, residential community provided with the physical amenities of electricity, water and sewage as well as with the social amenities of schools, churches, recreational facilities and medical posts. There, with their varied workmates and to the sound of factory sirens and the regulation of time clocks, they came to perform the highly coordinated tasks which had evolved world-wide over four centuries of sugar field and factory management.⁹

RSL was, in other words, a rather distinctive and modernist place: those living there were brought together so as to work for wages; they were there primarily to produce a commodity for sale on the market; they survived largely by purchasing food with the wages they earned; they generally lived in nuclear families and interacted with neighbors and fellow workers who were likely unknown to them prior to coming to RSL.¹⁰ This is to say, RSL was definitely not a village in the Tangu or Chambri sense.

Although RSL was not a village, the post-colonial, village court system that had been instituted nation-wide was, nonetheless, expected to operate there. Village courts were supposed to be relatively informal and to make decisions that took local

Australians; and two Indians. Finally, there were 789 seasonal employees, about whom we have incomplete information. However, we do know the provinces of origin for about three hundred of them, and these included all but Milne Bay and New Ireland. We might add that the terms “nationals” and “expatriates” were commonly used by both nationals and expatriates to refer to themselves and to the other.

8 The land which eventually became RSL was purchased from indigenous people in 1956 by the Australian administration to be offered to Europeans in pastoral leases. When RSL was established, it had to buy the leases from these Europeans. The leases came as a package involving several small cattle ranches scattered down the Markham Valley and one large ranch in the Upper Ramu Valley. The latter was divided: a portion became the sugar operation and a portion remained as a ranching operation. Although there has been some synergy between the ranching and the sugar operations (cows, for example, were sometimes fed molasses and cane-tops), the two were quite different kinds of operations.

9 For informative discussions of the development of sugar cane processing technology—including its great improvement in the 19th century—see Deerr (1950) and Mintz (1985). See Bakker (1999) for a state-of-art specification of sugar cane growing techniques.

10 RSL became part of a 500 hectare township (known as Gusap). The township was carefully planned and controlled. Its residential center, consisting of two adjacent gated communities, was surrounded by over 7,000 hectares of RSL-owned sugar cane fields. RSL staff lived in these two gated communities. All houses or apartments were provided with basic and free utilities and most were reserved for (again) RSL's almost 700 permanent RSL employees and their immediate nuclear families. These families were defined in the Employees Handbook as “one husband or one wife and dependent children” (RSL 1993, 4). Any visitors, whether members of an extended family or wantoks more generally, were to be registered and allowed to stay for no more than three weeks.

customs into account. (They were, thus, unlike district courts which were more formal and based decisions on codified national law.)¹¹

Because RSL's village court encompassed people from a myriad of cultural groups, with a myriad of local customs (again, those living at or near RSL came from all over Papua New Guinea and, in the case of expatriates, from all over the world), it was recognized as somewhat unusual. In fact, it was sufficiently unusual that, during 1999, the Madang Provincial Government sent two instructors to run a refresher course at RSL to advise (or remind) RSL's village-court magistrates (themselves Papua New Guineans from varied locales) how best to deal with the diversity of those coming before them. Together with the magistrates, we attended this course.¹² The primary instructor (an Engan) introduced the judicial challenge in this way:

At Ramu Sugar there are people from the Highlands, Sepik, Papua, Kainantu, Madang—and it is not clear which of their customs should be followed at the village court. Moreover, there are mixed marriages—a Sepik may be married to someone else, a Highlander to someone from Madang. If their marriage breaks up, one side says that it wants K2,500, two pigs and all the saucepans in compensation. The other side says, that's not our custom. So the work of the village court is not easy because there are all sorts of people: some village courts have heard cases of people from Italy, from Rome, from New Zealand. So how do we know which customs we should use? Because we have 'God-given intelligence' [English words used]. Whereas a monkey will try to get food out of a pipe with its mouth, a human will use a stick to do so. God has given humans the capacity to size things up and figure them out.

This instructor was especially concerned that the RSL village court magistrates use "mediation" during court sessions. Their job, he said, was not to make people afraid, but to help people achieve composure, *bel isi* in Pidgin English. This was a prerequisite for all else. All of us were prone to sin; we all had good and bad sides, but most of us would rather be good. Mediation would help us learn how to be good. To mediate was to use the law in a non-aggressive way. Indeed, the instructor stressed, "the key in mediation is not to dictate, but to give people suggestions—to say, 'if I were you, I would do such and such.'"

In the four breaches of sociality we describe below, we provide a spectrum of cases showing a range of rhetorics of equivalence. Though all of these cases project

11 On village courts in Papua New Guinea, see, among others, Gordon and Meggitt (1985), Scaglion (1985; 1979), Westermarck (1997; 1986), Zorn (1992), Goddard (2005).

12 RSL provided free room and board to these instructors and gave RSL employees released-time to attend the course. There were ten students in addition to us. All were Papuan New Guinean males: six were RSL employees; three were "outgrowers," neighboring Mari villagers, all (Markham speakers) who had put their land in sugar cane; one was a local businessman. The RSL employees occupied different grades and were from various provinces: one Grade 3, from the Enga Province; two Grade 5s, from the Western Highlands and Enga Provinces; two seasonal employees from Madang and Enga Provinces; one manager from the Morobe Province. Two of the outgrowers were from the Mari village of Bumbu and one was from the Mari village of Bopirumpun. And, the businessman, the owner of a trade store and snack bar located on RSL property, was from the Eastern Highlands Province. All had been elected (although few elections were contested) by their different RSL and Mari constituencies.

amity, the projections range from the amicable to the intimidating: from the “if I were you,” in the empathetic sense of “if I do unto others,” to the “if I were you,” in the coercive sense of “if you know what’s good for you.” In so doing, they reveal the increased recognition of (cash- and class-based) incommensurate differences that in new ways create obstacles and opportunities to assert efficacy and worth. (It should be noted that many of these cases at RSL seem to reflect the same tensions that Jorgensen, this volume, describes as arising between Highlanders who did and did not receive income from the nearby Ok Tedi mining project.)

Instance One: The Model for Mediation

During the provincial-sponsored training course, the primary instructor asked the magistrates to provide their own real-life examples of disputes and to adjudicate these disputes. They were to divide into two groups, with one enacting the roles of claimant, defendant and witnesses and the other, village court magistrates. The overall goal was to use their human intelligence so as to recognize and even to advocate the reasonability of cultural perspectives not their own.

One example the class provided was of particular interest to us because we already knew something of its real-life circumstances. The dispute concerned Emmanuel Moba, one of the students and a magistrate from Bumbu, again, a local Mari village that had put its lands into sugarcane for sale to RSL. Moba was in conflict with his in-laws from Chimbu in the Highlands. Moba’s son had met a Chimbu woman when her mother was teaching at one of RSL’s schools. The couple was living at Bumbu and already had two children. Her family had set her bride price, in both money and pigs, at a level Moba thought was unreasonably high—much higher than was usual among the Mari and among coastal people more generally. Moreover, her family was putting increasing pressure upon him to pay, particularly because, as someone with land in sugarcane, he had a regular income. However, Moba regarded much of this income as already entailed by the far more reasonable claims of immediate kin. What to do—particularly since, in his experience, Chimbu could pursue their interests with uncomfortable persistence.

The members of both groups decided which roles they would play. Moba, playing (as many knew) himself, was invited by the mediators (members of the other group) to describe his grievance. Sketching out the case, he said that the problem involved “a man of the coast and a Chimbu woman.” He said that the family of an in-marrying Chimbu woman wanted K6,000¹³ and two pigs in bride price, but it was not the custom of his coastal group to pay so much. Coastal people paid a maximum of K1,500. Could the court reduce the price? Then the man representing the Chimbu side of the case spoke. Interestingly, he was himself a Coastal from Madang. He said that it was usual Chimbu custom to charge much more than they had asked of this Coastal man, as much as K8-9,000 and ten-to-twelve pigs. They had already reduced the price to help him out, and had no intention of reducing it more. After all,

13 In recent years, the Papua New Guinea Kina has fluctuated considerably in relation to the US\$. During the time of most of our actual RSL research, in 1999 and 2000, we estimate that K1.00 was worth about US\$.35.

there had been two children born by this time. The girl's father, paternal uncle and grandfather would not change their minds and the law had to straighten this all out now. Moba (obviously switching from a generic Coastal to himself) said that he only got paid for his sugarcane once a year. It wasn't the same as for those coffee-growing Highlanders whose money came in more often. Could he have a little more time?

The man playing the chief mediator of the village court first cautioned that it was not up to him to dictate a resolution. Nonetheless, he continued, if he were the Coastal man, he might agree to pay K3,000 and one pig at the next Christmas and the same amount, the year after. Moba and the "Chimbu" responded that this seemed fair. The mediator then said he would instruct the village court clerk to fill out the appropriate form and give a copy to each.

Finally, the instructor asked what the class had thought of this resolution. Pretty good, everyone agreed, because each side was treated equally and each could be seen by the other as having a plausible case.

This resolution was, then, defined as a model of what magistrates should strive for in their village courts. The outcome of *bel isi* through mediation defused the conflict between different cultural groups that threatened to get out of hand. Though the Mari, at least, felt that, by virtue of their sugar income, they were likely to be targets-of-opportunity, the resolution of the dispute defined neither party as delinquent—neither as cheats nor as extortionists. And because the dispute was more cash-based than class-based, differences were not so incommensurate as to defy establishing relations of relative equality. However, perhaps partly because members of different cultural groups were involved, the relationships restored (or established) were amicable in rather minimal form. As such, the sociality that emerged was less the stuff of on-going life than something people could live with. It resulted less in the commotion of a long-term engagement, than a reasonably affable stand-off in which each agreed to leave the other relatively alone—provided that certain conditions were, and continued to be, met.

Instance Two: The Village Court and the Moral Young Man

Subsequent to this refresher course, we attended a number of village-court sessions. One of the cases involved (not surprisingly for Papua New Guinea) a big pig.

A mature man (referred to by the magistrates as "big man") brought charges against Tony, a young Chimbu who worked as a seasonal laborer in the RSL packing house.¹⁴ The big man had come down from his home village to insist that Tony (referred to by the magistrates as "young person") repay him for the pig he had killed upon the occasion of Tony's wedding. The big man explained that he was the maternal uncle of Tony's wife's father—and had been asked by his sister's son (again, Tony's wife's father) to kill a pig in celebration of the wedding. It was, he stated, a huge pig, worth K1,000—and one for which he had expected to be paid. After all, Tony was working for money and could afford to pay.

14 Seasonal employees were hired for the annual six-to-seven month harvest season. The number of seasonal employees was greatest (nearly three times the present number) during the early years when a large labor force was necessary to cut the cane by hand.

Tony responded by telling the magistrates that he had, in truth, thought the pig to be a counter-prestation in recognition and appreciation of the twelve pigs and K1,240 he had distributed during the marriage ceremony. Nonetheless, when the big man had suddenly arrived at RSL on three previous occasions, he had given him K100, K40 and, finally, K20. What more generosity did he owe a somewhat distant affine who kept arriving unexpectedly and demanding money?

The magistrates, particularly the Highlanders among them, were very interested in this case. They carefully questioned both men to verify the facts: to determine who had paid what to whom. And then they turned their attention to the size of the pig. Just how big a pig was it? It was definitely worth K1000, the big man insisted—and it had been “killed for nothing.” A witness who had seen the pig was called and verified that it was a very big pig. The coastal magistrates (Moba in particular) persisted in wanting to make sure that it was not, for instance, a K500 pig. How long had the big man taken care of it: two years? three years? The big man insisted again that it was a huge pig and that the young man was a “big head”—was someone who thought he knew it all. One magistrate suggested that the case should be referred to the appropriate village court at Chimbu. But the big man insisted that, because Tony worked for wages at RSL, the court should be heard at the place where people had immediate access to his wages.

Moba considered it odd that all the elders at Chimbu had seen the bride price distributed and the big pig given but had not seemed to think that further exchanges were necessary. However, the big man would not be mollified, persisting that he had killed his pig for nothing. Moba then told Tony that, regardless of whether the big man was his affine, maternal relative, or kinsmen, Tony should help him out. Tony replied that he had been helping him out, but couldn’t do much more since he wasn’t paid that well at RSL and had debts to co-workers. The big man insisted that Tony just didn’t care. Indeed, he continued, “I almost died last year when I came down here to the lowlands.” As evidence, he produced his “health book” and showed the magistrates his diagnosis of malaria. His parasite count had been 100,000.

The magistrates reached a decision a few minutes later; one that they thought would allow Tony and the big man to “shake hands.” Although they could not be certain as to the size of the pig, they were sympathetic to the big man’s plight, including his high malaria count. Moreover, they felt that Tony did, in fact, want to make the big man happy by doing the right thing. Since he had already paid K160, the magistrates concluded that K440 should be forthcoming. That would mean that the big man would receive K600 for his pig. Would this be ok? Yes. But, since Tony only earned K120/fortnight and perhaps some over-time pay, he would need two months. Granted.

The two left and the magistrates prepared to turn to their next case. But, before they could do so, Tony came back into the room. He wanted to explain, he said, that he wasn’t a “big head”—that he wasn’t disrespectful of the authority of his elders and of tradition. Not only would he comply with the court-ordered fine, but he would try to get a pig to send back with the money.

In as much as this case involved members of the same group, it differed from many (though far from all) of the village court cases at RSL—and, indeed, it differed from the “model” case presented in Instance One. That this case concerned people

who, by virtue of both kinship and home area, were likely to remain involved in each other's lives affected the important distinction between those who worked for money—had a regular (if seasonal) income—and those who didn't. To be sure, the big man was trying, to some extent, to “cash in” on a kinship obligation. He had singled out Tony because of his salary. But this was not all that the big man was doing. At stake for him was more than maximizing his investment. He was also affirming his personal efficacy by demanding the respect that compensation would convey. Correspondingly, *despite the evident element of coercion, if not extortion*, in the big man's actions, Tony found it important that he be understood by the magistrates as a moral young man. Moreover, in wanting to compensate the big man with not only money but a pig, Tony wished to do more than settle a grievance. He wished, as well, to further amity.

Instance Three: The Tables Turned

Our next case concerned employees at RSL who had extensive, face-to-face relationships with each another, yet were separated not just by culture but by race. Though race relations at RSL between expatriates and nationals were far different from those in pre-colonial Madang District, many of the difficulties of establishing mutual moral worth remained. First some background about RSL's attempts to create racial amity.

There were many explicit attempts on the part of expatriate managers to create a solitary community of sugar-producers from all of those working and living at RSL. (All expatriates by the time of our work were managers—not supervisors or workers.) One such attempt was to promote self-conscious representations of community in the *Sugar Valley News* (SVN), a generously illustrated, mimeographed booklet published twice a year between 1983 and 1991. Importantly, as we shall see, this booklet provided largely expatriate-orchestrated images of how members of this community should see one another.

In the SVN, there were many profiles (as well as photographs) of people—both nationals and expatriates—as equal members of the RSL community: all had educations that equipped them with the particular skills they brought to the common sugar-producing enterprise; all enjoyed their leisure time in various ways with friends, neighbors and co-workers; all had supportive, nuclear families. And all appreciated the beautified homes in which their families lived. In one issue of the SVN, for example, under the heading “Health, Garden and Home: Garden News,” we see portraits of four gardens and the houses they surrounded. Each was a winner in the RSL-wide competition that had been organized for the best garden. Accompanying these portraits were descriptions that stressed a European aesthetic of the domestic landscape.

This carefully landscaped garden is the result of hard work and a love for beauty. Spreading trees shade a rich green lawn and a blaze of shrubs and annuals give color (Anonymous 1985, 17).

And:

The most striking features...[of two other of] the gardens...are the well cared for lawns (Anonymous 1985, 18).

Interestingly, *all the winners were nationals*. All, moreover, were awarded their prizes for plantings very different from those we found around the supervisor's house into which we moved during 1999: there we found the trenched, mounded and scrupulously weeded sweet-potato gardens so pleasing to Highlanders' eyes and so central to Highlanders' subsistence. Although vegetable gardening was not disqualifying in the RSL garden competition, subsistence had to be distinguished from, and not dominate over, aesthetics. Thus, one prize-winning Papua New Guinean housewife was described as spending "alot of her time tending the vegetables and flower beds" (Anonymous 1985, 17). Correspondingly, the national wife of a high-ranking national manager at RSL told us that her husband would allow her to plant only ornamentals on her front lawn. If she wanted to plant Papua New Guinea subsistence crops, they had to be discretely hidden in back of their house. Otherwise, expatriates might still think of them as "natives."¹⁵

Indeed, while the SVN was careful throughout to equalize expatriates and nationals, the equality was based upon the acceptance of Western patterns of social organization and Western aesthetics. For expatriates to have set the terms of inclusion in a less selective, less self-interested way would have been radical. Although RSL expatriates would (for the most part) strive to say that "they were as good as us," these same expatriates would be unlikely to recognize, much less accept as meaningful, the reverse aspiration: to strive to say that "we were as good as them." In this regard, it would be a rare RSL expatriate who would seek to understand, much less participate in, the aesthetic pleasures of sweet potato gardens. Or to understand, much less participate in, the other aspects of Papua New Guinean life at RSL that reflected indigenous standards of sociality and inclusion.

In fact, virtually the only portrait we have of an expatriate accepting these local standards of sociality and inclusion was that of the instructively anomalous court case we now turn to. Reported in the SVN, it presented a Papua New Guinean-orchestrated vision of community, of conviviality—of equalization. And, in that instance, the expatriate's participation was involuntary.

An extraordinary court case was tried a few months ago here at Ramu. Former...Manager, Mr...[an expatriate], was arrested shortly before his departure from PNG to England. The arrest was seen by many as an attempt to keep Mr...from leaving the country.

Village Court Magistrate, Mr. Veto Oraraka, had received a summons from one of Ramu's [female national employees]...and the arrest took place shortly afterwards, outside RSL head office. Officers present at that time were RSL Security Guards, accompanied by 'SingSing' [ceremonial] dancers led by Mr. Jim Wilson (in full singsing costume) and the employees of Building, Estates and Housing. Most of RSL's clerical staff also witnessed the arrest.

15 On the aesthetics of work in another Papua New Guinea context, see Demian (2000). On the importance of homes and gardens in the colonial enterprise, see Macintyre (1989).

At the trial, held at the 'Rec' Hall, and at which Village Elder, Mr. Buka Atape, and others, were present, the defendant was accused of adultery. Mrs...had brought along her baby boy...as testimony of the defendant's misdemeanor...

[After reluctantly admitting guilt, a] compensation fine of K20.00 per fortnight maintenance fee for...[the child] was set by the Magistrate. Furthermore, a special potion was prepared and drunk by...[the defendant], in the presence of the court 'to prevent him from committing any such further offenses'. Magistrate Orarake also ordered...[the defendant] to pledge a good-behaviour bond for not less than 1 year, before finally dismissing the case.

To continue the good feelings resulting from this decision, the court defendant and witnesses retired to enjoy well-earned drinks and food prepared by Danice Wilson (Anonymous 1987).

Significantly, the article included a photograph of the village court proceedings. In the center and looking at the camera was the glum-faced expatriate defendant. He was flanked by some 30 nationals who were either in security uniforms or in the shells, feathers and leaves of native ceremonial finery. All were standing respectfully before—and subject to the authority of—the seated, Papua New Guinean magistrate.

In this case, it was Papua New Guineans who were promoting the relatively self-conscious representations: it was they who were setting the terms for comparison—defining the nature of equalization. In so doing, they were affecting a set of reversals and transformations of the usual RSL patterns of authority and community. This paternity case provided Papua New Guineans with competence and legitimacy: it allowed them to implement *their* ideas about justice. Thus, they made the expatriate progenitor into a Papua New Guinean father; they made him join a Papua New Guinean family; they made him become a member of a Papua New Guinean world; and they made him become, through the efficacy of the potion, a part of a newly constituted Papua New Guinean community, one in which his membership was as a chastened, rather than as an authoritative member. It was into their sociality—and on their terms—that he was inducted.

Such an "induction" was, we think, especially gratifying for these Papua New Guineans. In particular, it would have been an occasion to get back at Europeans for generally having things (including sexual encounters) their way. More generally, it perhaps would have been an opportunity to assert a fundamental vision: a vision not only of what mutual engagement should or might be, but of what it should have been; a vision in which different sorts of people, through their mutual willingness to be players in the same game, were recognizing—and should have long recognized—each other as having worth (cf. Bashkow 2006).

However, gratifying though this "induction" was, few present at the case likely expected that the progenitor would actually commit himself to this sociality—to this narrative of mutual engagement. In fact, immediately after the case he returned to England. There, with wife and family and far from the jurisdiction of a Papua New Guinean magistrate court, nothing much could be done when (as we are virtually certain was the case) he neither established a relationship with his Papua New Guinean son nor made payments to support him. Hence, the amity established

in the Rec Hall proved finite. That he could—and did, after all—leave pointed to the fact that the differences between him and his Papua New Guinean “inductors” still remained importantly incommensurate, both in terms of access to resources (airfares and the like) and of inclination (refusal for these ties to bind). Rather than commitment to on-going mutuality, he sought, in effect, a quit claim payment—whatever it took to get out of there.

Instance Four: Obligations Beyond the “Vanishing Point”

The last case we wish to discuss involved the coercive use of moral claims through the application of an explicitly hybrid genre—one increasingly common at RSL and elsewhere in Papua New Guinea (cf. Strathern and Stewart 2000). This genre linked moral accountability with modernist mechanisms of control. Its use demonstrated mastery of the rhetorics of both tradition and of state-sanctioned power. We provide here a gem of this genre. It was a letter demanding that Jacob Bando, the Police Station Commander at the government police station located at RSL, RSL itself and the managers of the two mini-supermarkets at RSL pay K60,000 to the kin of Ben Saiyo Wionti for his wrongful death.

The bare facts were both well known and inconclusive: Wionti, a member of a nearby Kafe-speaking group, had been killed. He was shot, perhaps accidentally, by Bando, who may have been drunk when he tried to break-up the domestic dispute between Wionti and his wife. Wionti’s kinsmen then arrived *en masse* at the RSL police station in forceful protest. A temporary truce was negotiated, in part by RSL managers. During this truce, Bando fled to Madang and the resident families of the police stationed at RSL also left for safer areas. For several days, the market and the rest of the RSL commercial center were nearly deserted because retribution was a real possibility.

Eventually, a letter demanding compensation was received by RSL and the two mini-supermarkets at RSL. Sent by twelve “spokesmen” of Wionti’s kin, it was written in serviceable English although marked as a translation from Pidgin. Here it is in slightly amended form:

TRANSLATION FROM PIDGIN ENGLISH

Saiyo Ben Wionti

Rihona (O’Cean) people

18th July, 2000

DEMAND FOR COMPENSATION OF K60,000 (SIXTY THOUSAND KINA)

1. K20,000 from PSC JACOB BANDO. The Government and the public saw and know that you, the PSC of Ramu...Police Station, shot and killed [Mr. Saiyo Ben Wionti], at mid-day on Saturday, July 1st, 2000, when he and his wife were having a domestic argument.
2. K20,000 from the two business houses - Papindo’s and Macate’s Super Value.

a) These stores always suspect people of stealing things. And the people of our area are frequently suspected by the police. And, now, we see the fruits of these suspicions since the police shot and killed BEN SAIYO WIONTI.

b) Community policing and guarding: The police always patrol around and guard the properties of the two shops, keeping their employees and their wives safe.

c) Unemployment: If the two companies had employed Ben Saiyo Wionti, he would not have been shot and killed. They overlook the people from surrounding villages and only employ people from other provinces.

3. K20,000 from Ramu Sugar Company.

a) 49% of the shares in RSL is owned by the Government. A Government employee shot and killed an innocent person. These was no good reason for the shooting.

b) Ref. Points 2: part (b) and (c).

c) Ramu Sugar Company has not built a public toilet. Therefore, the late BEN SAIYO had to use the sugar field. His wife suspected that he had gone with another woman into the sugar field and started arguing with him. This lasted until the PSC shot and killed him.

Are there different laws applying to the National and Provincial government levels? We would expect that the Governor of the province, if he had a car accident, to pay K30,000 for to keep the peace among the family of those he had injured. What is the difference when a PSC of the Police Department shoots and kills a person for no good reason?

We made it easy and left everything in the hands of the Law and have waited patiently for 18 days. It is almost three weeks now and no one has properly replied to us. We would like to take the law into our own hands now and, therefore, demand payment from you all.

We would like to receive an answer within the next 14 days, starting from today, July, 18, 2000, through August 1, 2000.

The above points summarize our demands.

Those who wrote the letter intended to hold a range of people and organizations to their legal and moral responsibilities. Their claims rested on these points, on these lines of causality and of connection:

- 1) PSC Bando, as the person who killed Ben Saiyo Wionti, must pay compensation.
- 2) Wionti should, as a local person, have been employed at either of the two stores. If he had been, then the police would have protected him rather than shot him. These stores must, therefore, pay compensation for not hiring him, a fact which led to his death.
- 3) The government was Bando's employer and, hence, was responsible for his actions. The government was also the major stockholder in RSL. Thus, RSL must stand-in for the government in this matter.
- 4) RSL was additionally and significantly responsible since, if it had build a public toilet, Wionti would not have had to use the adjacent RSL cane field to relieve himself. His wife, thus, would not have suspected that he was engaged in an affair in that cane field and would not have quarreled with him. If she had not quarreled with him, there would not have been the domestic

disturbance that led Bando to shoot him.

Obviously, such claims as these were potentially unlimited. They could, for example, have readily encompassed those who sold Bando the beer he had allegedly consumed. They could have easily encompassed the kin of the woman with whom Wionti was purported to be having an affair. They could have even ramified to encompass the two of us, since many thought that we would benefit from writing about Wionti's death. These claims were based substantially on a moral logic BurrIDGE and the Tangu knew well—one of multiple and ramifying social connection: our lives had affected each others' and therefore we must take responsibility for the effects. This was true not only of individuals but of entities such as the government, the police, supermarkets and RSL (cf. Gewertz and Errington 1991). These claims of connection and responsibility were also amplified and substantiated by a techno-legal language which asserted knowledge of and access to (district and national) court procedures and powers. Taken together, the moral logic and techno-legal language could be used to justify large numbers of irate and formidable Highlanders gathering in righteous indignation to assert their rights. The history that such claims were generating in contemporary Papua New Guinea was one in which nothing stayed fixed. It was a history where anything could happen and one in which, whatever happened, someone, somewhere, had to have been responsible.

This case against RSL and the other defendants was unlike those we considered earlier. In the first three instances (the cases of Moba, Tony and the wayward expatriate) there was common agreement that the relations being invoked—those of kinship and marriage—should entail on-going obligations. In this fourth case, there was no agreement that the relationship being invoked between Wionti and the defendants carried *any* obligation at all. Certainly the defendants repudiated the argument that they had breached an amity and thus behaved irresponsibly: in their view, they had neither moral nor legal obligation to hire someone lest he might at some point be shot by the police while quarreling (post-defecation) with his wife. Indeed, from the perspectives of RSL and the mini-supermarkets, unless there was a contract or other explicit agreement, there was the presumption of *no relationship*—of no connection (much less of binding connection) between Wionti and themselves. Thus, for the defendants, a successful defense would be to repudiate liability by (among other things) establishing that due diligence had been exercised so that obligations (extraneous to the production and sale of sugar) had been minimized if not entirely avoided. Their solution to the claims against them—as guided by their attorneys—would be to ignore it or, if pushed into court, to have it dismissed as groundless.

Those bringing the claims were hedging their bets—indeed, concatenating them—so as to compel RSL and the other defendants to respond to their demands. The claims of Wionti's kin were couched in ways that *both did and did not* presume amity: social connections (as intricate and extensive) and responsibilities and obligations (as pervasive and encompassing) were presented as both the basis of moral entailment and the basis of contract and liability. Thus, RSL and the other defendants not only should pay, they could be forced to pay. Wionti's kin would probably be most satisfied if they were able to elicit a large compensation payment from contrite

defendants; however, they would still be happy if they were able to extract a large, “quit claim” settlement from unrepentant defendants. In a contemporary Papua New Guinea, where social relations have become increasingly mediated by money, either outcome would have established Wionti’s kin as people to be reckoned with: amity established or amity forgone—either outcome would have established Wionti’s kin as efficacious and as worthy.

Conclusion: New(ish) Wine in Old(ish) Bottles

Throughout this chapter we have, in effect, been addressing the broad question of how “the reproduction of a structure become[s] its transformation” (Sahlins 1981, 8). As we have shown, this reproduction and transformation involve a process wherein “the old names that are still on everyone’s lips acquire connotations that are far removed from their original meaning” (Sahlins 1985, ix). Concerning the rhetoric of amity and of moral equivalence in much of Papua New Guinea—the logic of reciprocity and of commotion—we think that this process has become rather far advanced. Indeed, a casual perusal of Papua New Guinea’s English-language daily newspapers, the *National* and the *Post Courier*, shows that there are currently a range of meanings (a range of connotations) concerning this rhetoric and this logic (cf. Wardlow 2006). Correspondingly, such a range of meanings suggests that the fundamentals of social life are themselves shifting—are themselves transforming.

Thus, in these newspapers: tradition may be depicted as the bedrock of local morality as well as the “business” by which villagers extract resources from their urban kin; the “Melanesian Way”¹⁶ may be depicted as the model of mutually acceptable decision-making as well as the justification by which politicians claim the prerogatives of “chiefs”;¹⁷ the outcries of the “grassroots” may be depicted as the

16 It had been, in substantial part, an attempt to defend and preserve what was best about Papua New Guinean forms of egalitarianism as recounted by Papua New Guinean lawyer and now senior politician, Bernard Narakobi (1980), in his *Melanesian Way*.

17 Members of the emergent middle class in the Papua New Guinea town of Wewak often spoke about themselves in ways that strongly implied an inevitable superiority because of ancestral precedent. Even those from among Papua New Guinea’s most competitively egalitarian groups would describe their fathers not as “big men” but as “chiefs,” that is, as hereditary leaders. To be sure, their fathers may well have been prominent, possessing more of what others had: pigs, pearl shells, ritual knowledge, wives and land. After all, the practices of colonial administration, such as installing local leaders as headmen, may have dampened fluctuating inequalities to the extent that the momentarily influential could ensure educational and other forms of “advancement” for themselves and their children. Yet, perhaps not surprisingly, our middle class informants saw their distinction more as the product of ontology than historical caprice or process. They were separated as permanently privileged because they were of a “chiefly” line.

This modern-day rhetoric of “chiefs” was, in fact, proving increasingly useful to politicians in particular and to members of the middle class in general to justify growing class differences. (See, for comparison, Besnier 1996; Feinberg 1978; Howard 1996; Lutkehaus 1996; White and Lindstrom 1998.) It summarized and made more palatable the shifts in life’s opportunities that everyone knew were taking place. It allowed for a transformed present in terms of a

assertion of egalitarian-based rights as well as the means by which the poor assert benighted cargoistic views or make irresponsible “hand-out” claims; the ultimatums of landowners may be depicted as the expressions of inalienable connection to place (*ples*, in Pidgin English) as well as the threats by which they—in concert with politicians and others of the elite—assert the powers of maximal disruption. This is to say, in a contemporary Papua New Guinea (again, one increasingly influenced by urban migration, commodities, cash, Christianity and English-based forms of education) it has become a matter of public debate—of explicit concern—whether and under what conditions amity, in Burridge’s sense, would still be feasible and desirable.

Through our discussion of a spectrum of RSL-focused instances we have tried to convey the nature of this transformation of structure and shift of corresponding connotations. We have shown Papua New Guineans increasingly making (oldish) demands for the recognition of equivalent worth within a (newish) context of truncated, diffused and provisional sociality; and we have shown Papua New Guineans increasingly evaluating (oldish) demands for equivalent worth in terms of (newish) quantitative measures that make differences incrementally incommensurate. And, often (or, at least, sometimes) before anyone knew what was happening, the commotion of on-going amity frequently became the composure of *bel isi*, the contention of court-litigation, or the finality of quit-claims. To be sure, Kenelm Burridge (as suggested) might not be surprised, but we expect that he would be disappointed.

reinvented, stable past which defined distinction not in terms of continuity but of difference. It also implied that difference still carried certain, though distinctly limited, obligations. Thus, unlike big men (again, who were like everyone else but more so), contemporary “chiefs” were clearly different, at least partially—though not completely—dissociated. This, we think, both signaled and facilitated a shift in political process in the direction of increasing stratification. The big man’s compulsory egalitarianism and leveling redistribution to his allies was becoming transformed: it was changing into the politician’s discretionary handouts to his electorate (such handouts, drawn mostly at election time from large slush funds, were perhaps a form of stratified redistribution) as well changing into, for example, the middle class Rotarian’s voluntary service—diffuse noblesse oblige—to the generalized less fortunate.

In fact, if the cultural bases allowed (and perhaps even if they did not), chiefly claims by the most elite might be followed by formal chiefly installation. We were not, therefore, surprised to learn that several national politicians holding especially desirable senior posts—posts which conveyed numerous opportunities, both licit and illicit—were given chiefly titles by their kin and constituents. Not only have such men of long-term eminence as Sir Michael Somare, often described as the father of the country, been transformed into “the chief” (by which title he is generally known throughout the Sepik and beyond), so also have others of more recent prominence. Thus, during 1996, both of Papua New Guinea’s daily newspapers carried front page pictures of a chiefly installation. Each newspaper published captions such as “Paramount chief is a new title for Deputy Prime Minister Chris Haiveta, pictured above shaking hands with leaders at Iokea village after being ‘crowned’” (Tannos 1996, 1).

This page intentionally left blank

PART III
NEW MEN AND NEW WOMEN

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 7

Changing Minds: Hysteria and the History of Spirit Mediumship in Telefolmin¹

Dan Jorgensen

Introduction

For some time now Melanesian ethnography has been attending to issues of globalization in response both to changes taking place in the world and also to theoretical currents within and beyond anthropology (Lederman 1998, 2-3, 7-8). These efforts have yielded an impressive number of recent studies (Akin and Robbins 1999; Carrier 1992; Errington and Gewertz 1995; Filer 1999; 1999; Foster 1995; Knauff 2002a) that share a commitment to working in an expanded context that takes historical change as axiomatic and central to understanding Melanesian lives. If, as Lederman has argued, such studies are part of a wider reorientation that seeks to reposition Melanesianist work by freeing it from its confinement to the “savage slot,” they also give us reason to look back at the history of Melanesian ethnography with new eyes.

One of the first points to make is that the contemporary preoccupation with issues of rupture and continuity that characterize so much thinking about globalization is not new in Melanesianist work, and has a long history going back at least to the days of Williams and his work on the Vailala Madness (1923). It was some time before Williams’ account enjoyed a place in the Melanesianist mainstream, and I have argued elsewhere (Jorgensen 1994) that there is good reason to think that

1 I am grateful to many people for their help with my research in Telefolmin, first of whom are Telefol friends. Apart from those named in this account (some of whom appear under pseudonyms), I would like to mention Dagasim and Levi Binengim, Wesani Iwoksim, Beksep Dagayok, Welagim, Uunsep Keselimengim, Peter Sandeyok, Trondi, Tiinamnok, and Fobayok. Mark Winfield and Tony and Maria Friend have also been very helpful over the years. Kenelm Burrige and Roy Wagner were always generous and unflagging mentors. The research on which this work is based was supported by a number of agencies, including the Canada Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Cultural Survival, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and the National Science Foundation. For his help with this chapter, I offer thanks and acknowledgement to Joel Robbins, my colleague in Mountain Ok ethnography, whose arguments concerning *Rebaibal* Christianity have done much to shape my current thinking on the topic. I am also grateful to John Barker, Roger Lohmann and Imke Jorgensen for comments on earlier drafts.

this was in part due to the fact that his account fit poorly within an anthropology whose canonical trademark was the ability to show how cultures formed integral wholes. The situation he described was something of a scandal: the Vailala people chucked central institutions and practices overboard under the apparent sway of “automaniacs” and what for all the world looked like a form of collective hysteria.

I think it is fair to say that Williams’ account was for some time seen as an embarrassing oddity without much relevance to the anthropological concerns of his day. In retrospect, of course, we know that it was taken as a prototype in the development of a massive literature on what became known as cargo cults. Since the 1990s there has been a resurgence of interest in this literature, much of it in a spirit of reflexive critique. While there are ample differences between critics, many agree on two basic readings of the literature: that cargo cults (to the extent that they existed at all) are best read as resistance to colonial hegemony, and that the discursive deployment of “cargo cult” as a label was one of the means by which that hegemony was secured (see Hermann 1992; Kaplan 1995; Lattas 1992; Lindstrom 1993).

I do not intend to venture into the briar patch of such debates here except to note that—while therapeutic on their own terms—such critiques risk marginalizing their object. In the process we stand to lose sight of what the cargo literature can tell us about issues that are very much alive in contemporary Melanesia, for if cargo cults seem to be a relic of our disciplinary past, millenarian movements have not vanished from the Melanesian scene (Jebens 2004; see, e.g., Kocher-Schmid 1999; 2000; Stewart and Strathern 1997). Instead, I wish to return to a topic that seems to be one of the greatest sources of present-day embarrassment: the place of hysteria in millenarian movements.

Lattas (1992) has taken Williams to task for his pejorative account of “madness” in his portrayal of cargo movements among the Vailala people, arguing that this pathologized them as a means of policing innovation and, in the process, underwrote the colonial order of the day. To be sure, Williams gave ample grounds for rebuke with his talk about “collective nervous symptoms of a sometimes grotesque and idiotic nature” (1923, 1), but I think Lattas misses an important part of the account: colonial observers were not alone in seeing something alarming in the episodes of hysteria associated with the movement. Williams was at some pains to offer local glosses of these states, which were variously described by bystanders as madness, craziness, or giddiness and by participants as drunkenness, being struck, and general confusion (“belly don’t know”) (Williams 1923, 2-3, 7-8).² Furthermore, although the burden of his account is to discuss the collective aspects of the movement and its doctrines, he made it clear that in its earlier phases, at any rate, local onlookers were themselves nonplussed, if intrigued. In describing one instance, Williams noted, “the people of the village watched him with a sort of gloomy uneasiness; they were not by any means amused”; of another, he said, “many people present watched closely, and, as it seemed, with a touch of fascination” (1923, 7); and of a third, “although

2 The Madness was also referred to by the Motu term *kavakava*, which Dutton and Voorhoeve translate as “1. mad, insane, stupid” and “2. empty” (1974, 197). The latter gloss is provocative in terms of some elements of the argument sketched out here (see also Jorgensen 1994).

such a silly-looking creature when under the influence of the Madness, he was by no means exposed to ridicule or disrespect. On the contrary he was the object of silent and, it seemed, rather scared interest..." (1923, 5). I think it would be a mistake to underestimate the extent to which episodes of hysteria were problematic for Vailala people themselves, albeit in terms very different from those that preoccupied the colonial authorities. We of course know that the hysteria became part of a practice of possession or spirit mediumship, for which there is also a respectable body of literature (Boddy 1994). But to rush to this reading without pausing over the issue of hysteria in its own right is to talk of what hysteria produced without asking how it did so.

On the face of it, hysteria would seem to be a poor starting point for analyzing cultural process, but I think a good case can be made for its centrality in understanding the dynamics of contemporary Melanesian life, not the least in regard to questions of rupture and the emergence of alternative modernities (see Knauff 2002b). I take my cue here from Kenelm Burridge, whose work on Melanesian millenarian movements differs importantly from that of his colleague, Peter Lawrence. Lawrence (1964) was impressed by the recurrence of cargo movements over time. For him this persistence was evidence of continuity in epistemology and cosmological beliefs, and the movements themselves were evidence of the impossibility of breaking away from underlying cultural assumptions. For his part, Burridge was also cognizant of local cultural context in the emergence of such movements—most notably in *Tangu Traditions* (1969b)—but his emphasis was the other way around. Instead of focusing on continuities, Burridge drew attention to the movements as attempts to seek something new and different from traditional forms (1969a; see also 1960).³

For Burridge, what required analysis was, in today's terms, not continuity but rupture, and this is a theme he develops extensively in one of his more refractory works, *Someone, No One* (1979). Ostensibly devoted to an exploration of individuality, *Someone, No One* takes change—personal, moral, cultural and social—as its leitmotif. One of the consistent threads he elaborates is the idea that all social systems—equated with structure, order and rationalization—are in some sense flawed and imperfect, and that the slippage between conventional moralities and individual experience can give rise to new kinds of awareness and cultural forms. A second and parallel line of thought pursues the tension between what he calls "event" and "rationalization" (e.g., 1979, 30-43):

The event and its rationalization are crucial: the relationship discriminates between a reproduction of the given order or structure on the one hand, and the critical attempt to define a new and emergent or possible structure more in keeping with the perception of the truth of things on the other. Assertions to autonomy, working against the processes of socialization which create the person, are opposed to and negate a given moral order (Burridge 1979, 33).

In this chapter I wish to draw on such ideas to understand the history of spirit mediumship among the Telefolmin, a population of swiddeners living in the mountains of Papua New Guinea's West Sepik Province. The period with which I

3 See also Dalton's contribution to the present collection.

am concerned covers the time just before national Independence in 1975 through to the establishment of the nearby Ok Tedi mining project and its aftermath in the late 1980s. During this time span Telefol society underwent profound change in which spirit mediumship played a crucial role.

The title of my chapter refers to another passage in *Someone, No One* in which the relationship of individuality to power is discussed in the context of alienation and charisma:

... since the capacity to change one's mind about truth and reality, say 'no' to traditional ways, reject current moralities, and infuse others with an articulate notion of new moralities must entail some initial distancing from, and distaste for, the truths and realities predicated by the given moralities at a particular time, some sort of alienation is also entailed (Burridge 1979, 212).

Saying "no" to traditional ways was the special task of *spirit meris*—female mediums of the Holy Spirit—who precipitated a charismatic movement known as *Rebaibal* in the late 1970s. *Rebaibal* transformed Telefol society and its moral order with a program predicated on the abandonment of the traditional men's cult and replacing it with a Christian church answering to God. Through their actions an entire society changed its mind.

Spirit mediumship is not a traditional Telefol practice, and the emergence of *spirit meris* was something new. But while this is so, *spirit meris* are not entirely unique. *Spirit meris* have recurrent episodes of shaking that are virtually identical to bouts of hysteria experienced by others both before and after the advent of *Rebaibal*. In this chapter I am especially interested in examining the role of hysteria and its differential interpretation, which I approach by comparing *spirit meris* to others for whom hysteria was frankly pathological and symptomatic of alienation. The task then becomes one of understanding how it is that *spirit meris* were different from others, a task I view with an eye towards the interpretation of hysteria as *event* in Burridge's sense, as something that is problematically outside the range of familiar experience.

Mediumship's Precursors: "Mass Hysteria" in Telefolmin

Over a period of a few months beginning in late 1973, twenty-three individuals in Telefolmin underwent episodes involving acute and dramatic dissociative states. Such episodes were unprecedented in local experience, and administration and medical authorities were sufficiently concerned that they called for an assessment by the District Health Officer of the West Sepik at the time, Stephen Frankel (Frankel 1976). After first ruling out organic factors, Frankel came to the conclusion that these events constituted an outbreak of what he termed "mass hysteria." Those affected exhibited a range of symptoms including confusion, dizziness, uncontrollable crying, shaking, a sensation of cold, temporary deafness and loss of consciousness. More than half also exhibited an additional pattern of shouting and aggression, often directed at near kin (especially fathers, according to villagers I spoke with). Such episodes were of short duration, and those affected claimed to recall nothing of

the incidents after the fact, although some were also said to have reported hearing noises—knocks, whistling or voices—at the onset of the episodes.⁴

Frankel was intrigued by several aspects of this situation, which resembled instances of temporary madness reported from other parts of Papua New Guinea (see, e.g., Clarke 1973) but differed in a number of particulars. In many of the reported cases such behavior was a traditionally recognized pattern or syndrome, with vernacular covering terms and local theories of etiology. In contrast, Telefolmin were as astonished by these episodes as outside observers were, and had no established explanation for what happened. Another puzzling feature was the collective character of these events, which differs from the more common pattern of isolated incidents reported in the New Guinea literature. More striking still, all but one of the individuals involved were female.

Frankel's analysis makes it clear that, with a couple of exceptions, these cases were concentrated near the government and mission stations. Virtually all of the women affected were young, with an average age of 18, and most of these were either undergoing training at the mission's nursing school or were pupils at the government school. All were well educated by local standards, and those at the mission station received religious instruction as well. Frankel also points out that many of those affected also had a history of conflicts with their parents, most often over marriage choices or unsanctioned sexual relationships. Frankel devotes some attention in his account to the way others perceived the outbreak, and these perceptions are revealing. He reports that the women themselves suspected that ghosts or bush spirits (more properly, the Bush Spirit, *Magalim*), a "germ" or Satan were the cause.

Older Telefolmin, particularly men, had different views. Some suspected that men's cult spirits (*usong*) were angry that young women were no longer observing traditional food taboos (see Robbins 1995). Others thought that the hysteria was an introduced European disease, since such things were unknown before Europeans came. Others still put it down to the Bush Spirit, a diagnosis frequently espoused by those I questioned on the matter. What is notable about these views is that they either implied that those affected were responsible—as in the violation of food taboos—or that there was no human responsibility or possible redress in such a case. From one point of view this meant that what was going on was beyond anyone's control, but it also meant that no one had the burden of dealing with the situation. This is striking in the context of a system of traditional ideas that often addressed misfortune as resulting from moral failure or the malign actions of others.⁵

Although they don't play a part in Frankel's account, it is worth noting that local Europeans held distinct perspectives, as I discovered in conversations with them about these events. For their part, mission staff tended to view the matter as either

4 Such sounds are traditionally associated with both human spirits (*usong*) and the Bush Spirit. Telefolmin also point out that people can make the same sounds.

5 At least as far as Telefolmin are concerned; the attribution of the source of trouble to Europeans, however, contains a germ of moral critique consistent with Telefol historical experience. It is also relevant that Telefolmin attributed the lapse of food taboos and other practices to the effects of European intrusion (see Frankel 1976, 120).

straightforwardly medical or else as the result of the actions of Satan.⁶ Government officers had a more jaundiced view. They pointed out that the young women at the nurses' school were single and were viewed as eligible targets by young men around the government station. This yielded a number of clandestine liaisons that had precipitated court cases, brawls, and tense relations between the women's parents and the missionaries held responsible for the young women's care. Never inclined to sanction premarital liaisons in any event, the mission had a renewed incentive to prevent contact between the nurse trainees and young men. The result was an escalation of surveillance and control of the women by mission staff, who eventually kept them under lock and key after hours and later installed fences and other security measures to keep young women in and young men out. This, in turn, provoked greater efforts on the part of some young men, who viewed such measures as a challenge to be mastered.

While these differing views reveal something about the respective positions of the various parties on the station scene, they are also important because they suggest that the conflict between young women and their parents occurred within a triangular relationship that included the mission. Given that one attraction nurses' training had for young women was the prospect of greater freedom, and given that a number of younger women of that period (including some of those experiencing episodes of hysteria) had the avowed aim of marrying a man employed at the mission or government station, it seems that the very existence of the nurses' training program (secure dormitories and all) was a key ingredient in the dynamics underlying the outbreak. It would also seem inescapable that the tension between autonomy and constraint played out between the young women and their kin was reproduced in a single site on the mission station.⁷

“Shaking Work” and the Invention of Spirit Possession

After 1973 things quieted down at the nurses' training school and no further outbreaks took place. In 1975, however, a new incident of hysteria emerged, this time focused on the government primary school, centered around a teenaged boy named Selok.⁸ By all accounts a talented and intelligent student, Selok began experiencing episodes in which he trembled and lost consciousness. These he attributed to encounters with the Bush Spirit, who he said had “kicked” him from one mountaintop to another in the bush.

6 During this period some mission staff felt their efforts were being undermined by Satan in other ways, most notably in the murder of one mission employee by two others in a scheme to eliminate an inconvenient husband.

7 Frankel's description of the nursing school offers some circumspect hints here, and is followed by a discussion of similar outbreaks at an Ursuline convent and a Malaysian girls' school (1976, 121-2).

8 This was the same year as PNG achieved Independence, and was also a period accompanied by announcements and speculation concerning the inauguration of mining at Ok Tedi. See Jorgensen (1981a).

Unlike the nurse trainees, Selok did not attract the attention of local authorities. Moreover, he actively cultivated these episodes, seeking subsequent encounters with the Bush Spirit by going for long walks alone in the bush, which he described as “training.” One of the roles traditionally ascribed to the Bush Spirit was policing the separation between the living and the Land of the Dead, and Selok claimed that during his periods of unconsciousness he was able to see into the Land of the Dead and visit the ghosts there.

Selok rapidly acquired a reputation as a “new *usong*,” or seer. Traditionally, *usong* divined the causes of illness by gazing into pools of water to see the reflections of afflicting spirits and recommend remedies.⁹ Such seers, however, never went into trance, nor did they communicate directly with the spirits concerned (cf. Robbins 2004, 341n8). Selok’s losses of consciousness—locally understood as a temporary “dying”—assumed the form of controlled trances in which access to the dead assumed a greater and greater role, and quickly drew interested audiences in the villages near the government and mission stations. Before long he was routinely holding séances in which the spirits of the dead inhabited his body and spoke through him. These séances, whose onset was marked by trembling he termed *Ook Bembem*, or “shaking work.”¹⁰

Selok may fairly be said to have invented spirit possession in Telefolmin, and it is worthwhile to consider his séances in some detail. Selok’s initial contact was with the spirit of a deceased younger brother, and as he became more adept at his trances he would undertake to summon the spirits of others. People came to the séances asking to speak with recently dead relatives he summoned by inscribing their names on a blackboard in the Land of the Dead. Those in attendance would ask how their kin were faring. These conversations yielded varying kinds of information, including the fact that the Land of the Dead was cold and that the dead now wore store-bought clothing. Many asked whether there was any sign of Jesus (there was not). Significantly, Selok insisted that the audiences include women and children. In this regard his séances more closely resembled classroom settings or church services than traditional spirit house rituals, to which only initiated men were admitted.¹¹

Despite the initial interest *Ook Bembem* aroused, Selok’s work was short-lived. The dead had, after all, relatively little to say to the living. In the process, however,

9 These spirits were often men’s house spirits, also known as *usong*.

10 In previous publications (e.g., Jorgensen 1980) I erroneously transcribed this name as “Ok Bembem” rather than *Ook Bembem*. This seemingly minor difference is significant, however, for /ook/ (a contraction of /ogok/) is a Telefol loan-word from the English “work”. Strathern reports a suggestively similar term (*Wok Mbembe*) used with reference to the “Red Box” money cult in the Hagen area around the start of the 1970s, raising the tantalizing possibility that there is a wider genealogy for *Ook Bembem* than is visible from a purely local perspective (Strathern 1979, 1980).

11 The preoccupation with contacting the dead was in part a consequence of the colonial administration’s prohibition of traditional mortuary practices, which involved the retrieval of the deceased’s bones as spirit house relics (*men amem*). By this means many of the dead had been brought back to the village to assist the living. This prohibition ruptured the sustained contact with the dead that was the focus of much cult activity. As a result, the men’s cult was in a state of crisis by the mid-1970s (see Jorgensen 1980).

Selok had established a new space for hysteria, not simply as an affliction, but as a vehicle for purposeful activity in a venue that reconfigured relations between men, women and youth.

Rebaibal

As Ook Bembem subsided, hysteria reappeared on the Telefol scene in a new and dramatic form, as part of a charismatic Christian movement. Shortly after Independence the Baptist mission established a bible college at nearby Duranmin. There, as the Telefol principal, Diyos Wapnok, sought signs of Christian revival, several women—wives and sisters of pastors and students at the college—began to experience uncontrollable fits of shaking and began speaking in tongues.¹² Taken as evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit, these events became locally known as *Rebaibal* (see Bennett and Smith 1983; 1996; Jorgensen 1981a; 2001 and in this volume; Lohmann 2000b; Robbins 2004).¹³ Acting as hosts to the Holy Spirit, these women—soon to be followed by several others—became known as *spirit meris* (“spirit women”) had visions and went into trance as the Holy Spirit spoke through them, sometimes in unintelligible tongues and sometimes in a combination of Telefol and Tokpisin (Pidgin). Through them the Holy Spirit made God’s wishes for Telefolmin known and a thoroughgoing program for the transformation of Telefol society was launched.

Reflecting God’s desire for a closer relation between men and women in the context of the Christian family, the Holy Spirit urged men, women and children to join together in family meals in which they jointly consumed foods that had been taboo; henceforth, children could eat adult foods, women could eat men’s foods and men could eat women’s foods. God had meant for people to be able to eat everything together, the *spirit meris* explained, and while some were fearful of the risks, the fact that no one suffered adverse consequences was taken as evidence of the Holy Spirit’s power (see Robbins 1995). Likewise, the Holy Spirit explained that the customary prohibition on eating one’s own pigs was the mistaken result of ancestral ignorance, and people were to be given license to do so and to sell whatever pork they did not consume for cash. Most of all, the human bones that served as cult relics were to

12 See Roger Lohmann’s chapter in this volume for Diyos’ own account of these events. An alternative published account, apparently heavily edited by the missionaries Norm and Sheila Draper, is available as a chapter in *Daring to Believe* (Wapnok 1990). See also Draper (1990) and two slightly differing versions on the internet (Anonymous 2004; Waugh 2003).

13 I persist in terming this movement *Rebaibal*, rather than “revival” in order to stress the specifics of its local character and to emphasize that the Telefol pronunciation as /*Rebaibal*/ also captures a resonance with /*Baibal*/ = “Bible.” *Rebaibal* was not promulgated by the local Australian Baptist missionaries, and departed in numerous ways from western Christian expectations of what revivals entail. As I have remarked elsewhere (Jorgensen 1981a), and as Robbins shows at length (2004, 126ff), *Rebaibal* was a movement in which local people effectively made Christianity their own while declaring independence from the authority of the expatriate mission. For an index of missionary ambivalence concerning *Rebaibal*, see Bennett and Smith (1978).

be removed from the spirit houses and either buried or cast off into the bush. These bones—the locus of men's house spirits—were said to be the cause of illness and the tools sorcerers used to inflict harm, and were to be cast away in the interests of general well-being. God also wanted people to become Christians, and the Holy Spirit insisted on baptism, the confession of sin and the abandonment of men's cult practices. As *spirit meris* fanned out over the landscape, all but two Telefol spirit houses were either destroyed or converted into village churches as all but a handful received baptism and became Christians.¹⁴

While those at the bible college welcomed and actively sought to induce hysteria-like states as manifestations of the Holy Spirit, it is important to note that both the trance states and the *Rebaibal* program were not immediately embraced by village people. There was initial resistance from many men, most of whom had kept their distance from Christianity. Some insisted that the women were either crazy or that the trances were faked, and the first reactions to *Rebaibal* often included elements of alarm, a reaction also shared by government authorities in the area. A patrol officer who witnessed *Rebaibal* activities in the Eliptaman valley north of the government station, described what he witnessed as follows:

A New Way of Christian Worship in the Church Cause Trouble to Some People in the Eliptamin Area

... there was a big problem between the people regarding a new way of Christian Worship in the Church and even within the villages. The Christian people in the area proclaimed that once the Holy Spirit of the Lord is in them they fall to the ground and die suddenly... These people say that they die and come to life again when other fellow Christians pray for them.... The people in the area are very concern about this and they sing and pray every single day, hour, minute, they never go out to work in their gardens or either do Government work. If they do go out they said they would die on the way and who would pray for them to come to life again. The people were very, very afraid of this and never moved more than 15 yards even to get their lunch, or supper. As they confess their sins they confess in public and whosoever did wrong against him or her started quarreling and fighting started ...

There were many men and women [who] fell down to the ground but the fellow Christian people carried them away quickly... The people were very concern about this and their minds went crazy. My personal opinion is that everybody who concentrates too much on this would get some sort of mental disease (Lyambiane 1978).

Although the author of this report was an indigenous Papua New Guinean, there is no mistaking a tone reminiscent of F. E. Williams' early account of the Vailala Madness: hysteria here means trouble. But as with Williams' account, hysteria was also a source of concern for the local people involved, and the same officer reports

¹⁴ The holdout villages included Telefolip, the seat of the traditional men's cult, and the neighbouring village of Kubrenmin; this resistance was further backed by the threat of armed confrontation in the late 1970s (Jorgensen 1981a). By the mid-1980s, however, Christianity was well established in these locations as well.

elsewhere that a number of people approached him for help on behalf of affected relatives.

Despite such resistance, *Rebaibal* carried the day. One of the most persuasive factors was the immunity of converts from the illness and death that were held to result from the violation of food taboos, a move that was underscored by the casting aside of men's house spirits who were thought to punish such transgressions. Further, many men self-consciously threw in their lot with *Rebaibal* because of the dilemmas of commitment that it posed. While nobody doubted the existence of the traditional Land of the Dead—whose existence was reaffirmed in Ook Bembem—as the abode of deceased kin, it also became clear that Christians were instead destined for Heaven. Having to choose between joining deceased parents or one's (Christian) wives and children after death, most men chose the latter. Hysteria itself played a role as well, since many scoffers and skeptics underwent fits of shaking after confrontation by *spirit meris*. This was seen as dramatic evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit, who was said to have “kicked” them.¹⁵

Rebaibal radically transformed many of the basic tenets of Telefol society, most notably in the abolition of the men's cult and in the reconfiguration of patterns of exchange and consumption.¹⁶ In both instances divisions between men and women and between old and young were replaced by an emphasis on nuclear families drawn together into church congregations. Taking inspiration by the Holy Spirit as the point of departure, *spirit meris* were successful in precipitating a collective change of mind by saying “no” to traditional moralities.

Mine Workers, Money and Villagers

By the mid-1980s Telefol society had undergone a second major post-Independence transformation, as Telefolmin threw themselves into Papua New Guinea's minerals boom with an enthusiasm on a par with their embrace of evangelical Christianity. When the Ok Tedi gold and copper project got underway in 1981-82, Telefol men poured into the new town of Tabubil to work at the mine. At the peak of employment in the construction phase, as many as 40% of the adult male population took up jobs as heavy equipment operators, carpenters, cooks, security staff, community relations workers, drivers, clerks and common laborers. In a matter of only a couple of years, Telefolmin had gone from being a remote West Sepik backwater to one of the wealthiest rural areas in the country, and in subsequent years individual Telefolmin prospered further as entrepreneurs in spin-off developments or as village storekeepers who

15 Figuring initially as an affliction, the remedy was prayer and baptism. Significantly, one aspect of traditional curing rites involved pouring water over the head of a victim to chase away an afflicting spirit.

16 The Holy Spirit's program was at one point also said to include the abolition of traditional shell valuables (*bonang*), though this element was later disavowed by converts. It was also said that the practice of paying bridewealth was to be abandoned, but this too failed to take hold (see Jorgensen 1993). I have argued elsewhere (1981a) that an anticipation of problems concerning the allocation of money expected to come from mining also played a role in *Rebaibal*. See Bennett and Smith (1978:139).

got in on the action by busily supplying their neighbors with commodities ranging from beer and frozen chickens to radios and Adidas sportswear. Telefol villages, particularly those near the government station, experienced a building boom as newly returned carpenters used their skills to build houses out of sawn timber with corrugated iron roofs. Local business groups matched this with stores equipped with freezers and electrical generators, snooker tables, *haus kaikai* (restaurants) and at least one video parlor along the government road near the mission station, a strip that became known as *Taun* ("Town").

The presence of so much money and the absence of so many men could not help but reshape village life. Mothers and wives gardened and tended pigs for absent sons and husbands and secured their claims to cash in the process. In addition to their usual gardening tasks, women undertook to clear plots for gardens (previously only done by men) while adjusting their routines by planting more cassava and less taro in tracts located nearer village sites than had previously been the case. These measures sufficed to support a dramatic increase in pig production despite an apparent labor shortage, and many found time enough to plant vegetables to be marketed for the Ok Tedi commissary. Few women complained, and some even relished their assumption of previously masculine tasks, including a handful who went so far as to kill pigs on their own and beat drums to celebrate the fact. When workers returned on Christmas furlough they were greeted with feasts in which numerous pigs were slaughtered in their name—for which they were expected to provide appropriate cash counter-gifts. As one man observed, the only people without cash were babies in their mothers' bellies.

The general enthusiasm for Ok Tedi and the cash it brought was matched by the eagerness of men—mostly young—to work there and sample the attractions of life at Tabubil. Though the work was demanding, workers enjoyed a new and relatively opulent lifestyle. Housed in dormitories with showers, clean beds and toilet facilities, they had a standard of accommodation otherwise known only from rumors about city hotels. Meals always included meat and as much food as one could eat, and after-hours activities centered on the canteen and its bar. Flush with cash and sporting store-bought clothes, many vied with one another in beer consumption and other leisure pursuits. Sundays were spent in impromptu sports matches or barbecues. All in all, with money in their pockets and fun to be had, most reckoned it was a good life.

Things were not entirely rosy, however, for this lifestyle came with some strings attached. Relatives from Telefolmin routinely made visits to Tabubil, and many young men found themselves obliged to act as hosts whose generosity or lack of it would be remarked upon back home. Many complained about this seemingly endless stream of visitors and agitated with the mine management to curtail this traffic. Many also received letters from home, and an obligatory component of such letters was a request for cash. Villagers' demands came to a head on the annual Christmas furloughs, when workers would be presented with pigs and the expectation that they would be generous in passing out banknotes.

Those who left the mine found the transition to village life difficult. The villages seemed cramped and drab after the excitements of Tabubil, and some preferred to hang out around the tradestores near the station. Their return was again greeted with

expectations of liberality, but often they came with fewer savings than they would have liked. Single men faced skyrocketing bridewealth demands. Some were able to marry and meet affines' expectations, but others found themselves wondering how they could possibly afford a wife. One strategy was to call upon friends at the mine for contributions; others sought wives from outlying areas where expectations were lower. One man worked diligently as an unpaid clerk in a relative's tradestore in the vain hope that his industry would secure him an offer of a wife (Jorgensen 1993), while others simply gave up hope and departed for towns on the coast in search of work.

Unsurprisingly, a handful of returnees quickly acquired reputations as trouble-makers. In a span of less than half a year, I recorded a half dozen incidents of assault, drunkenness, adultery, vandalism, break-ins and attempted rape in a single village of about 200 people. Other returnees attempted suicide. Several more had bouts of hysteria very similar to those experienced by the nurse trainees of more than a decade before. One of these was Kemsep.

Hysteria as Pathology and Cure—The Case of Kemsep

Unlike some other returnees, Kemsep had a wife, Salinip, before he went to work at Ok Tedi. Salinip lived with his mother while he was away. Kemsep enjoyed life at the mine, though he complained about the long hours of work. After he had been working for a couple of years the letters from home troubled him. His mother sent him letters often, each time asking for money. Salinip, who had become pregnant as a result of his last furlough, wrote regularly and also made requests. More worrying, however, was that she complained that she and Kemsep's mother had been quarrelling more and more often, with money as the bone of contention. When Kemsep sent money home to Salinip, his mother demanded that she turn over the money to her; if Salinip refused, trouble followed. Salinip asked him to come home in time for their child's birth and indicated that she wanted to move out of his mother's house.

Kemsep resigned his position and arrived home just in time for his daughter's birth. He tried to make peace between Salinip and his mother, but this quickly proved to be difficult, and so they moved into Salinip's father's house. Not long after, Kemsep began to complain about headaches, fatigue and occasional dizziness. Salinip urged him to visit the station hospital, but he put it off; when she asked him to accompany her to their gardens, he always managed to find a reason to refuse. Instead of going to the bush, Kemsep would visit *Taun* or hang around the village.

When Christmas came, many of Kemsep's friends from Tabubil came to visit. He insisted that his family move into a house temporarily vacant over the holidays. When visitors came, he would ply them with store-bought food and sugar-laced tea as they swapped stories well into the night. On one such night Kemsep was furious to find there was no sugar in the house. When he asked Salinip for money to buy some more, she complained that the only reason they had no sugar was that he had used it all up on his friends. Enraged, Kemsep threatened to strike her as she sat with her infant in her lap. He then grabbed his bushknife and dashed out into the night before Salinip or any of his guests could restrain him.

To Telefolmin this meant one thing: he intended to hang himself. Kemsep's friends and relatives gave chase and eventually tracked him down. He was listless and unresponsive and they brought him back to the village. In the following days, Kemsep remained morose and uncommunicative. He developed a facial tic and complained about trouble sleeping and would sit silently weeping for no apparent reason. One night the family returned to sleep in Salinip's father's house. Kemsep awoke shouting in the middle of the night that a man's hand had reached up through the hearth and attempted to pull him below. Salinip tried to console him, sometimes giving him their daughter to hold in order to comfort him. In response, he told Salinip that it would be best if she returned to her family with the child and he move to someplace where they wouldn't see him again. He said he was sorry she would have to raise their daughter on her own.

Kemsep was kept under continual surveillance. A relative was detailed to sit with him when Salinip went off to the gardens. He made repeated attempts to run out into the bush but was restrained each time. His attitude towards Salinip became increasingly belligerent, particularly when she urged him to go to the gardens with her. After several nights in which he complained that bad dreams were disturbing his sleep, he began shaking. His skin grew cold and he appeared to lose consciousness. Kemsep's family became alarmed and sent word for a *spirit meri* from a neighboring village to come.

The *spirit meri*, Wosilok, arrived a couple of days later and gave word for Kemsep and his family to gather at a house just outside the village. When everyone was assembled in a circle with Kemsep seated between the medium and his mother, they began singing hymns, after which everybody linked hands and prayed together. Applause followed and then Wosilok began talking, reminding Kemsep of the differences between being married and being single. She then asked him about his dreams, and he reluctantly told of an incident some years ago when he encountered the ghost of a deceased classmate outside the village. As he talked, his mother prompted him for more details and it became clear that it was this childhood friend who appeared in his dreams, asking him to follow him into the bush.

Here was the explanation for Kemsep's troubled sleep and his suicide attempts: his friend wanted him to follow into the Land of the Dead. At this point Wosilok placed her hand on Kemsep's shoulder and began shaking and trembling, and before long Kemsep was shaking too. Everyone again joined hands, this time praying about how Kemsep was being tried—he had left God's road, to which he must return. Wosilok now invited each person in the circle, one by one, to address Kemsep and pray for him. She then turned to Salinip, and reminded her of her duties to cook and do garden work. This was followed by applause and more hymn singing.

Wosilok recalled for the gathering others whom she had helped through prayer, and how her advice had served them well. She told Kemsep and Salinip that it would be best if they moved out of her father's house, and that Kemsep should at all costs avoid going into the bush. Food was served, first to Kemsep, then to Wosilok and then to others. Wosilok declared that if money were given to her, she would give it to the church because God did the work, not her. She also said she would come back in a day or two to pray near the first spot where Kemsep encountered the ghost. Then she and her friends left, taking some gifts of tinned beef with them.

Kemsep said he felt better, and slept well that night. He and Salinip shifted to an uncle's house, and another uncle hired him on as a clerk in his village tradestore. There were no further recurrences and the ghost troubled him no more.

Wosilok's curing session with Kemsep is remarkable in several ways, not the least of which is that it is nothing like traditional curing. Her trembling, a kind of controlled hysteria, was an indication of the presence of the Holy Spirit: she acted as a conduit for the Holy Spirit to reach Kemsep and heal him. The singing and linking of hands demonstrated Kemsep's connection to those around him in embodied form, and their concern was given verbal expression in their prayers and their words for him. Wosilok's reminders to both Kemsep and Salinip reaffirmed their mutual obligations, though she tacitly went easy on Kemsep. The prescription she offered sanctioned his refusal to go to the bush with the (probably accurate) diagnosis that this would put him at risk. While telling them they must leave Salinip's father's house, she pointedly failed to specify where they should go. Kemsep's uncles saw to the rest.

Kemsep's case displays tensions between autonomy and constraint that bear a general resemblance to those that informed the nurses' hysteria, but in his case they were configured in relation to a different set of cleavages brought about by the Ok Tedi project. The workers enjoy unprecedented freedom in a world previously only available to Europeans, with leisure time and ready money providing a space to move pretty much as they will. But this hasn't freed them of their ties to the villagers and their claims. The money they earn poses dilemmas of commitment—as in the conflict between Kemsep's obligations to his mother and to his wife, or between his family and his friends—that are not easily resolved. In such circumstances, knowing one's mind can be a difficult task: alienation or worse can ensue. For Kemsep, Wosilok played a key role in changing his mind and completing the job of bringing him home.

Kemsep's case was not an isolated one. *Spirit meris* have for some time been called upon to cure routine cases of illness. But they have increasingly been kept busy dealing with the special problems of men returning from the mine. These have included bouts of hysteria, dealing with strange apparitions commonly associated with mine workers, and a one-man crime spree. It seems clear that one of their roles is to deal with new pathologies that have been one of the prices of modernity.

Hysteria and the Holy Spirit

Part of my argument has been that *spirit meris* and the trance states they entered precipitated a rupture with traditional moralities. The *spirit meris*' trances were not unprecedented, however, and were foreshadowed by the nurses' hysteria and Ook Bembem. Here, I would argue, it is important to bear this continuity in mind if we are to understand how Telefol spirit mediumship came about.

If we compare instances, a number of common features come into view. One of these is that those affected were outside the circle of initiated men but had access to sources of power originating outside Telefol society. For nurse trainees, students, and former mine workers, it is not too hard to infer an acute awareness of new

opportunities and the impossibility of realizing them at home.¹⁷ This impression is strengthened when we consider that most of those affected had lived in settings that afforded some kind of community life isolated from the village: the nurses' compound, the bible college, and the workers' dormitories at Ok Tedi. This must have cast village life in a new and alienating light.

All of these considerations shed light on the circumstances under which hysteria arises. Until the emergence of *spirit meris* in *Rebaibal*, however, such incidents were transient, with only limited recurrence. Moreover, they were all (with the partial exception of Ook Bembem) seen as unambiguously pathological. How then, were *spirit meris* different?

Christianity is the most obvious factor; but to say as much is merely to pose the question again in a slightly altered form: why did Christianity make a difference? The answer to this question is not immediately obvious. The nurses at the mission station were all Christians, but nothing akin to the *spirit meris*' charismatic transformation took place: *only* hysteria. Nor will it do to suggest that institutional support for *spirit meris* in *Rebaibal* made the difference, if for no other reason than that, as we have already seen, they encountered lukewarm support or outright resistance from these quarters. I would suggest instead that the crucial factor was the attribution of possession to the power of the Holy Spirit.

As with the nurses' hysteria, possession by the Holy Spirit was initially taken as a sign that something was wrong. The difference was that recognizing the Holy Spirit as the agent meant not only that one could do something to put things right, but that one was obliged to do so. This bears a resemblance to the traditional logic that informed attacks by men's cult spirits, who would visit misfortune on people for moral breaches. The resolution in such cases was to recognize the source of the breach in one's conduct and to remedy matters by repairing one's relationship to the spirit through sacrifice. As far as one's own conduct went, resolution boiled down to restoring one's obligations to others and to observing whatever taboos one may have violated. What this did not amount to, however, was any commitment to changing oneself: lapses were taken to be temporary and particularized, confined to specific nexuses of relationship (cf. Schieffelin 1996:12).

In contrast to this, the Holy Spirit was far more demanding. An important part of putting things right was to confess sin; but whether specific sins were at issue or not, the Holy Spirit also insisted on a much more fundamental commitment to a permanent change in one's self. This was not restricted to merely correcting this or that mistake or repairing one or another relationship. One was answerable not merely to particular individuals or men's house spirits but instead to the Christian God who required one to account for one's life as a whole.

Thus the appearance of the Holy Spirit in *Rebaibal* innovated upon pre-existing ideas by specifically manifesting the active intervention of God in one's life. Returning to the role of hysteria, the embodied nature of the Holy Spirit's presence

17 I have argued elsewhere in a different context that the agents thought responsible—the Bush Spirit, the Holy Spirit and—considering Kemsep's case, the ghosts of childhood friends—are indicative of powers beyond the reach of the conventional order (Jorgensen 1998).

offered far more convincing and inescapable evidence than mere words, which Telefolmin have always taken as unreliable indications of the truth of things (see Robbins 2001b). The special role of itinerant *spirit meris* was to embody the Holy Spirit in widely separated locations. Responding to the evangelical imperative that accompanied the events at Duranmin, their *presence* as hosts of the Holy Spirit was far more effective in spreading their message than words alone could be: whatever people may have thought about already familiar mission teachings, trances and shaking were unarguably *events* that commanded attention.

Hysteria's evidential role¹⁸ was strengthened when skeptical onlookers found themselves falling to the ground shaking. This goes a long way in accounting for the extraordinarily rapid and complete spread of *Rebaibal* throughout Telefolmin. Aside from providing proof of the Holy Spirit's power, these events were interpreted as signs of sinfulness and called upon one to change one's ways through a commitment to God. The evangelical message was that trance and fits of shaking were not to be feared but welcomed as signs of the possibility of salvation and a new beginning.

***Spirit meris* and Telefol Modernity**

It seems evident that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit enabled the transformation of hysteria into mediumship by empowering *spirit meris* to speak for others¹⁹ in the twin sense of giving voice to the Holy Spirit and speaking to concerns affecting others. This combination was fundamental to the success of *Rebaibal* and its program. One result was the formulation of a new morality and, without being too sanguine about the ease with which people can reinvent themselves, the creation of a new individuality. It is also clear from a consideration of the circumstances surrounding the incidents at the nursing school or the emergence of Ook Bembem that *Rebaibal* addressed some of the underlying tensions that precipitated such incidents in the first place. So, for example, there can be no question that the cleavages dividing Telefol men and women associated with the men's cult have been fundamentally altered. Further, people can no longer rely on men's house spirits to monitor their conduct or offer them help in their efforts.

Beyond that, contemporary Telefol modernity has produced new problems—what to do with money, for example, or how to integrate newly mobile youth into the life of the community—about which the old ways are silent. *Rebaibal* Christianity has not provided clear answers to these issues either, but has sketched out two complementary directions in which to seek them. One of these is in facilitating a new individuality of the sort we associate with modern subjectivity in a specifically Christian formulation, one that retains its integrity in varying contexts by continual self-examination in relation to a transcendent God. The extent to which this is successful is itself an open question, but it entails the notion of an individual who is always on the spot and aware of it. The second, more clearly discernible route

18 The conventional Telefol conclusion to prayers—the equivalent of “amen”—is *afeen kwa*. In ordinary speech this indicates agreement and carries the literal meaning of witnessing the truth of something: “it is *seen*.”

19 The phrase is Roy Wagner's gloss on Daribi mediumistic hysteria (1977).

is through the institutionalization of spaces in which problems may be posed and answers sought.

One such space is in the churches which supplanted men's spirit houses. These are venues open to men, women and children in which the ongoing project of personal and collective redemption is to be pursued. Witnessing and confession are routine features of church services, and at such times it is not unusual to see a row of matrons sitting on benches shaking and trembling as evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence. Discussion and group prayer containing expressions of support and hope ensue as a matter of course.

This physical space is complemented by the metaphorical space established by *spirit meris*, who are called upon when really serious trouble arises. That there is no shortage of such occasions is clear from the problems generated by the Ok Tedi mine, which has divided villagers from absentee workers who must somehow sustain relations made difficult by distance and uncertainties of commitment. Here, as in the case of Kemsep's troubled return to village life, hysteria serves, as it did in the past, as a signal that something is seriously amiss. The difference is that now there is something to be done about it. That *spirit meris* make use of their own hysteria to cure that of others is less ironic than fitting. No longer revolutionaries, they have taken on the role of guardians; in the process, what I have been referring to as hysteria has been transformed from pathology to cure.

Conclusion

Instances of hysteria occurred in Telefolmin before *Rebaibal* and the advent of spirit mediumship and also after (and outside of) *Rebaibal*. Apart from Ook Bembem and *Rebaibal*, Telefolmin considered these episodes as pathological. Within the context of *Rebaibal*, however, they understood them differently. This is not a matter of mere labeling, for under the doctrine of the Holy Spirit the nature of the experience changed.

To say this, however, is not to render hysteria unproblematic—far from it, for the point of possession is to prompt questioning and problematize situations. In a sense, *Rebaibal* could not have existed without states of hysteria, deployed by *spirit meris* as midwives to a new morality in an active search for new ways of being. Missionary observers found one of the profound effects of *Rebaibal* was a new spontaneity (Bennett and Smith 1978:138), albeit one in which their own role was diminished. Just so: *Rebaibal* meant that new possibilities were opened. That many of these possibilities were crystallized by alienation and the changing moral valences of community life—women assumed a new importance in the villages at the same time as younger men gained access to new wealth and power—should be evident from the account above. Here one can see that *spirit meris* (and the Holy Spirit) put hysteria to work even as hysterical pathologies continued to be produced.

With regard to general questions of rupture and continuity in the emergence of vernacular modernities, we should not lose sight of the fact that the kind of spirit mediumship practiced in *Rebaibal* fits poorly into the two dominant approaches to understanding possession: either a rootedness in local culture or resistance to

domination (see Boddy 1994). It came literally from nowhere, and was striking (and effective) precisely because it was culturally disembedded. This point is underscored when we compare *Rebaibal* to Ook Bembem: the latter was evanescent largely because it stayed too close to traditional concerns; the former flourished precisely because it broke free of them. And while it is extremely important to recognize that *Rebaibal* emancipated local Christianity from the tutelage of Australian missionaries, it is surely a paltry reduction to see this as its only, or even main, significance.

Finally, I must plead guilty to eliding a number of important definitional distinctions in my account, glossing over differences between cargo cults, millenarian movements in general, charismatic Christianity and so on. In doing so, however, I think there is an underlying commonality that pervades the Melanesian ethnographic record even as I evade agonizing over the calumnies of epithets such as “cargo,” “madness” and “hysteria.” The point is perhaps best made by returning to another passage from Burridge’s *Someone, No One*:

History is made by the new or strange event which, not or improperly rationalized and therefore unstructured, a zero, is perceived ... and captured in a new rationalization, is made to count ... The repugnance for ... the flux of events [is] overcome in the perception that truth lies closer to the currently unordered than to the currently ordered (1979, 31).

Chapter 8

Morals and Missionary Positionality: Diyos of Duranmin¹

Roger Ivar Lohmann

Introduction

This chapter explores a distinctive moral conundrum facing missionaries—that of representing God’s will without conflating it with one’s own—by listening in on an indigenous Papua New Guinean missionary’s retrospective on his career. Diyos worked for many years among the Asabano and founded a bible college at Duranmin, Sandaun Province. He is aptly described by Joel Robbins (2004, 126) as “an extremely intelligent, thoughtful, and deliberate man,” Diyos’s mission triggered mass conversions across the Min region of central New Guinea. In the early years, the Asabano saw the missionary and his efforts as exemplifying the new ideal he preached. But later, his hard-earned status suffered as some questioned whether his activities reflected God’s or his own desires. While relying on multiple sources, I allow Diyos to tell most of the story in order to preserve his own impressions as accurately as possible. Allowing him to speak for himself is also called for since he was suffering criticism at this point in his career.

A member of the first cohort of Telefolmin people to receive a mission education, Diyos responded to a vocation and undertook his own mission among the Asabano at Duranmin, across a mountain range from his home. His work spawned a millenarian movement called *rebaibal* or “revival” (see Jorgensen, this volume, for a clarification of this usage) that saw the conversion of all of the Asabano, and many of the Min people to the south (Jorgensen’s and Robbins’s chapters in this volume follow some of the revival’s precursors and effects).

I met Diyos in 1991, in 1994-95 when I lived at Duranmin to study Asabano religion, and again in 2005 when I returned to study Asabano imagination and

1 I thank everyone in Papua New Guinea who shared their knowledge with me, especially Diyos himself. Thanks also to John Barker for giving me the opportunity of honoring Ken BurrIDGE at the 2003 ASAO session in Vancouver, BC. I was converted by several of John’s wise comments on earlier drafts of this chapter. Several at the session, including Bruce Knauff and Maria Lepowsky, offered helpful comments. Dan Jorgensen provided a copy of the very important Bennet and Smith (1983). I presented a second version of this chapter in 2003 at the Society for Psychological Anthropology in San Diego, CA. Thanks to session organizer Yohko Tsuji for her invitation, and to participants for their comments, particularly Claudia Strauss and Takie Sugiyama Lebra. Finally, I thank Pamela J. Stewart, Andrew Strathern, and an anonymous reviewer for their cautions and encouragements.

perception. With no vehicle road, Duranmin remains a remote place with access to outside settlements only by several days' walk or mission airplane. It is a multilingual community with allied Asabano and Towale living during 1994-95 in two hamlets, and Telefolmin living in several other hamlets, linked by the Baptist church. Beside the airstrip stood a cluster of buildings: a bible college and a church that had been founded seventeen years earlier by Diyos on Asabano land.

In 1991, Diyos was a middle-aged man, a pastor, and the principal of the Sepik Baptist College for training indigenous clergy. He struck me as the local man-in-charge—a complex and sophisticated person, he initially seemed slightly stern, but quickly revealed great warmth. Diyos lived with other immigrant Telefolmin immediately west of the airstrip and college buildings, just across the Ilim River on Telefolmin land. While I was there, an Australian missionary couple named Chris and Jane Ganter arrived to begin teaching at the college. Everyone at Duranmin seemed intensely Christian, many attending church services twice daily.

When I returned to Duranmin three years later, this quiet community was abuzz with subdued discontent. In my absence, Diyos had been dismissed as principal, and the college, taken over by the Ganters and renamed Min Baptist College, had moved to Olsobip, Western Province. Asabano people were saying Diyos had done some wrong things. Most importantly, he had fought with church authorities and driven away the college—the good thing that had drawn visitors, attention, and reputation to Duranmin.

Most accounts of missionaries focus on the work of Europeans. Yet in Oceania and other parts of the world, indigenous missionaries carried out the bulk of Christian evangelization (Munroe and Thornley 1996; Peel 2000) and, as Lutkehaus (this volume) shows, are now working far beyond their home areas. Individuals like Diyos were the great proselytizers who, in less than a century, made Papua New Guinea one of the most solidly Christian countries in the world. Their stories, however, remain largely unknown. By letting Diyos tell his own story, this chapter fills some of this void.

Beyond its ethnographic and historical value, this account of Diyos's later career exemplifies a moral pitfall bred by the missionary's positionality in society. As the spokesperson and agent of God, the missionary's own will is easily conflated with the deity's. When it becomes apparent that the missionary's self interest is masquerading as the will of God, a breach in the moral community can result. In discussing these issues my working premise, following Kenelm Burridge's (1978; 1991) pioneering work, is that the core dynamic of missionary Christianity is "metacultural," or similarly manifested in the work of evangelists regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

Historical and Ethnographic Background

Diyos's group, the Telefolmin, are dominant in the area of central New Guinea populated by Min groups who speak Mountain Ok languages and trace their descent from a mythical ancestress known as Afek or Old Woman (Craig and Hyndman 1990). Traditional Telefolmin religion centers on male initiations into secret mysteries of

ancestor and spirit veneration, emphasizing fertility and military power (Jorgensen 1981b).

The Telefolmin had their first contact with European explorers in the nineteen-teens (Brumbaugh 1980, 11-22). The first heavy influx of Western contact, including the construction of an airstrip, came in the 1940s. Following World War Two, the Australian colonial government founded a post near the airstrip. The Australian Baptist Missionary Society (ABMS) began operations at Telefomin (as the government post and airstrip are known) in 1951, when Don Doull arrived to begin missionary work among the Telefolmin (as the group's name is written).

In 1958, Doull and fellow ABMS missionary Doug Vaughan began a boys' bible school, with the teenage *Diyos* among the first class. *Diyos's* original name is Wapnok, but ABMS linguist Gil McArthur, for whom he worked as a cook, began calling him "George," which is rendered in Telefol pronunciation "*Diyos*." *Diyos* was among the first group of about 40 in Telefomin to receive baptism around seven years after the founding of the mission (Lohmann 2000a, 184-87).

The Asabano, among whom *Diyos* was called to preach, are culturally similar to Min peoples, however, they speak an unrelated language. They consider themselves descendants of the Min ancestress Old Woman, and their initiatory men's cult bore many similarities to that of Min groups. Ancestors and their bone relics were very important, as were secret men's rituals focused on foods tabooed to women and children.

The Australian government sent its first patrol to Asabano hamlets in 1963 and *Diyos* made his first visit in 1971. *Diyos's* appearance was very brave, for memories of past Telefolmin raids in the era before pacification remained. Several Asabano elders recalled that *Diyos* had gathered them together and requested they close their eyes in prayer. Fearing attack, they did not obey, but were impressed that the meeting was peaceful and benevolent. In 1974, following revelatory visions, with his students and other followers, *Diyos* moved the school to Duranmin. His mission there saw the conversion of virtually all Asabano people in the *rebaibal* movement beginning in 1977.

Diyos's Narrative

Diyos told me the story of his missionary career on May 29th, 1994 (Lohmann 2000, 187-216). He had accepted my invitation to visit my house in the Asabano hamlet of Yakob and relate his story, accompanied by his wife Mandi and a pair of Telefolmin women church leaders. The majority of the account was originally presented in Tok Pisin. *Diyos* began with the arrival of Australian missionaries during his boyhood.

The missionary Don Doull...put us in Sunday school. He taught us that the Lord exists, and how God created the Earth and made all things...I came to understand what he was saying, that this god was a god who existed eternally; there was no one who had made Him. So the Earth ...the sky above ...[and t]he moon and stars had been made by Him. It wasn't Afek [Old Woman] who had made them, or she would still exist. Later the Earth and all things will end, but this Man will still exist. If you believe in this Man, you will become like Him.

Through faithful commitment to God, Diyos is saying, one becomes identified with him and participates not only in his immortality, but also in his will. Diyos transcends himself by joining with God, as Charles Lindholm (1990) argues occurs generally in charismatic relationships. In so doing, he also joins in moral community with the Australian missionaries, centered on their orienting moral referent: God.

When I went to bible school, my thoughts became clear; it's absolutely true: God exists, and I must believe in Him. I was baptized the same year I had been at school for six years. When school was just finished, I was married. At the time we were married, my wife [Mandi] also became a Christian, and was baptized in 1962....They sent me to a village in Eliptaman, and I became the first pastor in the area....We two worked there for three years, 1961, '62 and '63.

Then they sent me back to Telefomin and I became Pastor in that area again. We stayed in Telefomin until 1968, when they sent us to a course called English Special Course...in the Highlands. We stayed there for a year, and then they sent me down to Australia for four months to travel to different churches and preach. When I came back it was 1969, and in 1970 they sent us to CLTC, Christian Leader Training College [in Banz]. We stayed there during 1970, and...were with an especially good friend from the Solomon Islands. We stayed together because a 'revival' had happened in the Solomon Islands, and...I was interested in hearing how revival had happened in the Solomon Islands. This challenged me too, that in my own area of Telefomin this kind of thing must happen as well. At this time also, we two prayed continually to God for a revival to take place in Telefomin.

In this segment, Diyos establishes his credentials and the legitimacy of his standing in the church structure by recounting his institutional training. His social position among church officials secured, he approaches God directly, asking him to bring about a change in his own life through an exchange (see Stewart and Strathern 2001). He presents God with fealty in expectation of a return in answered prayers.

When our term was finished, after our final examination and graduation, we prayed, and God spoke to me. He said, 'Okay Diyos, you have been asking Me for almost three years now, and I know that soon you will finish your training and you two will go back. When you go back, you won't work in your area. I'll give you another area, a new people, and a new land.' Then He said, 'If you obey and go to My area, I'll give you something big.'

While God's words remain vague, this is a turning point in Diyos's missionary career. Through believing, he would receive something big, probably a revival, from God. This promised to further both Diyos's and God's wishes.

Having received this message from God, and graduating in 1972, we came back and told our families in the village: Abungtamin village in Eliptaman. That's our home village. We said, 'God told us that at some time He will send us to another area. He didn't tell us the name of the place yet.' So we waited until He would call out to us to go....Then in the new year 1973, they gave us work at the bible school at Telefomin. ...

Diyos began telling people about the revelations he received, and claiming ownership of them. He had become a special person to whom God spoke, and as such he had

become the mouthpiece for God—a very high office that commands the respect of fellow believers.

When I was still a teacher in Telefomin, in 1974...[I attended] the World Pastors' Conference in Goroka.... There were nearly 7,000 pastors from all over the world who met at this time, and on Sunday morning we went to an American Baptist church. After the service we met a good friend who had been a classmate at CLTC [named Jeffrey]. He was from Goroka, and was pastor at Goroka Baptist Church. He's still there. We walked around his village and met his family. It was about noon when God called me. While we two were still walking along the track, God called 'Diyos, Diyos, Diyos.' He called me three times by name, and I thought the missionary [Lindsay Smith]...was calling me. But when I looked back, there was no man calling me. I went back to the place He first called me, and I saw there was no man there....I said, 'God, I'm listening, now you can talk to me.' Then God spoke to me. He said, 'Diyos, when this meeting is finished and you go back to Telefomin, I want you to move to Duranmin. Take all your students and help these people who are at Duranmin.' ... He said, 'If you follow my God and you go, I'll give you all something.' He spoke of the revival that He would give me, if I continued to call out to Him and come here [Duranmin].

When I heard this, my back shot like fire light and when we came back to the conference, I sat down and talked with this missionary [Smith]. I said, 'When I go back to Telefomin, I will take my students to a new area they call Duranmin' The missionary....didn't refuse permission; he said, 'That's alright, you can go to that area.'

When we took the plane to come back to Telefomin,...one of the engines stopped, and I said, 'This is a trial,' and I spoke to God. I said, 'God, if you feel that your work is finished, you can take my life. And if you feel that you have work for me yet you can save my life.' I spoke this prayer, and He saved my life.

When we...came back to Telefomin, I spoke out to the women. I said, 'Before He told us "A new place, a new territory." It's Duranmin now.' So the women heard and were happy. But my family didn't want me to go. They said, 'Forget it, you can't go. That's enemy country. They fight in that area, and they'll kill you.' But my wife said, 'You can't thwart the will of God; this is the will of God, so let him go.'

Diyos knew much about the Asabano, whom the Telefomin call Duranmin. His brother, Karusep, is named after the Kalu River, where their father participated in a successful attack on a group of Asabano. There was a tradition of enmity between the groups, but also interchange through the custom of capturing women and children in raids. Growing up in Eliptaman, across a mountain range from Asabano territory, Diyos knew the Asabano through such captives. It is possible that Diyos felt a particular attraction to the Asabano because of a sense of regret for past actions of his family against them, or perhaps out of a sense of superiority in which Telefomin had become a government center while Duranmin remained a remote backwater. But the only reason he cites is that God called him there, and it appears that consciously, at least, this was the only reason for his selecting the Asabano.

More and sometimes conflicting details of this account exist in the several written versions, as Robbins (1998, 49, n.5) notes. Dan Jorgensen (1996, 197-98), for example, writes that Diyos's ascent to leadership at the Duranmin bible college

was part of an indigenization policy by the ABMS, while local people considered it simply a matter of divine calling. Diyos was quoted by Lindsay Smith and another Australian missionary in 1977 as saying that the conference where Diyos received his calling was the World Vision Pastors' Conference in 1972. In that account, Diyos describes not only a voice, but a "vision" of "a man standing beside me who said to me that God would do a wonderful thing in the Telefomin area," and who also commanded Diyos to found a bible school "in a place that I will give to you" (Bennett and Smith 1983, 129). And, the version of this story in Diyos's account collected by missionaries Norm and Sheila Draper holds that Diyos's auditory "visions" from God sounded when he was on the verge of sleep. That version (Wapnok 1990) also differs from the present one in that he attributes learning that Duranmin was to be his field to a later time, after he was back in his home village, and that this occurred not as a result of hearing God's words, but through a spontaneous feeling of conviction. The remarkably large estimate of 7,000 participants at the conference Diyos told me is given in the Drapers's version as a mere "several hundred pastors from different countries" (Wapnok 1990, 157). Perhaps Diyos remembered or portrayed events differently on the three occasions, or else his translators and editors inaccurately rendered his meaning.

In the version that Diyos told me, the identity of the spiritual speaker is unclear. Diyos seems to be saying that God himself is speaking, yet he quotes the voice as referring to "my God," implying that the speaker is other than God himself. In Bennett and Smith's version the speaker is described as "a man." Robbins's (1998, 56-57) account recorded in 1992, shows that Diyos at first thought the voice was that of his Australian missionary, Lindsay Smith, but later discovered that it was in fact the voice of God himself, speaking directly to Diyos, rather than following the old line of authority through Diyos's white superiors. Robbins (2004, 126) identifies this as the moment at which Diyos moves from a position of obedient follower of an expatriate mission to indigenous leader of his own mission with direct divine authority. Perhaps the identity of the voice is unspecified in the version that I collected because Diyos assumes that identities of believers and God interpenetrate. Smith's voice comes to be recognized as God's voice, commanding Diyos while also passing a measure of divine authority on to him. This may also reflect the multipartite person of the Christian trinity, where Jesus might be referring to his god and yet simultaneously *be* God. For their part, Asabano individuals understand themselves to partake in and share personal and divine spirits, who are somewhat interchangeable, so that the man in the vision could be any Christian and yet be able to participate in God's identity (Lohmann 2003).

Diyos appears to be both respectfully obedient and in ascendant favor. In the struggling airplane, Diyos prays in rhetorical obedience, and his plane lands safely. Diyos's survival through apparent supernatural intervention makes the challenge of preaching in enemy country appear possible because he is now doing God's work and is therefore protected by him. Diyos is set apart from other Christians in that he hears God's voice giving direct and specific instructions.

At that time, the Asabano weren't here [at Duranmin]; they were at Kalu and Kienu Rivers. When I was in that area to pray, some went to get the others. Some of us left Eliptaman

and came....That was their first time. So, in 1972 when I came back from college, ...they had already selected me to become a teacher at the bible school. I came and got Wani and Kanau, two [Asabano] men. I took them with me and trained them at Telefomin. Mandi took one [Asabano] woman, Sansib, to study nursing....

So I took 25 students and moved. We left Telefomin and walked to Eliptaman. We spent four days there, and then we came here....They made a house for us, provided food, and gathered with us there....Nearly a hundred of my people came to work with the Asabano building the airstrip. We were in 1974....

When we built the first airstrip the community school teachers from Eliptaman came to check it and they said, 'This airstrip is too short. It should come back a little.' So we continued working on it, and when the teacher came back he said, 'Oh, that's not enough.' The people were really mad, and they said, 'You're just coming here and tricking us.' But I said, 'Don't complain or be angry. I think God has something to give to us, so he's just trying us....if we fail, God won't give us this thing.' So sadly the people heard this, and they went back to work. So we built the third airstrip. When the teacher returned, he said, 'Now it's good,' so they let the MAF [Mission Aviation Fellowship] plane come land. That was in 1975....

I took my family and went to Eliptaman, to my home village at Abungtamin.... On the first evening we were worshipping with everybody at the village, and in the night just we two were awake...We were saying prayers. At about 3:00 in the morning, the Lord appeared. He didn't simply speak, but He appeared Himself. He came and sat down in the house. And He used a bright light, He was light, and He came inside. As He did I fell down on the floor....I saw a big tree arise in the middle of the house. It went up and then divided into a fork. In the fork of the tree a big fire came out. I saw the fire rise, but it didn't burn the leaves of the tree or anything....

When I went to examine this light, the light spoke to me. It said, 'Diyos, God has received all of your prayers, and within three months you will get something big.'....

So I got up, and we were happy, and brought singing to the church. I told the people at the village who were with us, and we prayed and celebrated. It wasn't light yet. It was 5:30 AM.

Then we two evaluated what we had been told. He spoke of three months, but by this did He mean three days; or three weeks or three years? Would God give something to us?....

So this was January, and we stayed some days and then came back to Duranmin. We waited for three days, and nothing happened. Then a week passed, followed by the second week and the third week, and nothing happened. So we waited January, February and March. I thought if three months would pass without event, then I would see something happen on the third year. So we counted, together with the people here, and we prayed to God about this.

But when it was March, on the fifth or sixth, a student had a bad dream. He said, 'God told me "not all of the people have the spirit of God," and he continued, "in only three months they will have the spirit of God."' When we held a morning devotion in the school, he told us this dream and my wife and Josie [Bungsep], one of the leaders among the women evangelists, were at Telefomin, and they also weren't happy to hear this student's talk.

They were upset, and said, 'Why is he saying these things? We are Christians, we belong to Jesus, and yet we don't have the spirit of God with us?'...

In this segment, Diyos has a vision reminiscent of Moses's burning bush (cf. Bennett and Smith 1983, 129), and the speaker, identified as God, again refers to the plans of "my God." Three months later, when God says the big event will happen, one of Diyos's students at Duranmin (identified as a Miyanmin named Imisap in Bennett and Smith (1983, 127-28) has a dream indicting many of lacking a true connection with God. According to Bennett and Smith, Imisap had two experiences, the first on Sunday evening, March 6, 1977, in which a voice told him that an important event was soon to happen, and the second on the next evening, when "a manifestation of Jesus" said "that only four persons there were filled with the Spirit of God, and they were: himself, the lecturer Mimining, Mimining's wife, and Diyos" (1983, 128). Mandi, Josie, and others were upset by Imisap's dream report, which had quoted Jesus as saying that they were not filled with the spirit of God.

Three days passed.... So I prayed to God, 'God, what's happening in the spirits of my wife and the others, that they don't come and meet with us?' God said, 'Okay, tonight I'll do something, so you must gather everyone, your wife, and everyone else must come tonight to the fellowship.' So I gave notice to everyone in my family and my wife. She was still far away. She didn't cook for me, I was alone [laughing]. So I told them, 'You must come. God has spoken to us.' So everyone heard this and came. It was seven o'clock, when we were accustomed to holding evening fellowship, on Thursday night.

...The women from other families didn't come inside, they sat on the steps of the church, but they sat close to the door...I said, 'God is not a god of anger. God is a god of happiness, so we must rejoice in God.' Many people didn't pay attention. Then I said, 'Father God has a message for us. Father God will give us something tonight. So we must come and converse and give honor and glory to God. God will repay us.'

So when I spoke, I was looking at the story of Nicodemus in the Bible [John 3, 1-21], and I said, 'Nicodemus was a priest. He was a preacher. But when Nicodemus went to Jesus' house, Jesus told him, "Nicodemus, you must be born again." And Nicodemus said, "I have already been born. Should I go back to my mother's womb for a second time?" And Jesus said, "I'm not speaking of your body, I speak of your spirit."' Then I told them, 'We are already Christians, we are baptized, but some of us are like Nicodemus. Father God is inside of this, and He changes our lives. Father God has work for us to improve ourselves and become his good men and women. So we mustn't think, "We became Christians a long time ago, so why don't I have the spirit of God inside of me?" You have these thoughts and it makes you upset and angry. Father God will provide us with some work tonight. So let's come, and enthusiastically worship Him.'

I gave this speech and I prayed. When I began the prayer, the fire of God came through and hit me and went through the people. It came through like lightning. And they saw the fire come straight to my shoulders and through like that. And all the men and women fell down. As they lay there they cried, and my wife and those who were angry were rejoicing: a big fire had risen! It was something else! We were happy and singing songs and many men and women were laying about the floor, and some had collapsed outside the church.

They confessed their sins and sat there crying. I kept walking and didn't sleep. It went on until the next morning, until 6:00.

Sharing his despair with God, Diyos receives the nonchalant response that his wait is over. Armed with confidence, Diyos calls in the discordant flock, promising that tonight is the night. Diyos brilliantly brings tinder and spark together at the right moment so that his prayer, spurred on by his own and his congregation's expectations, explodes in a charismatic catharsis for all.

I went to the radio and told the missionaries what...God had done this night. Many missionaries came: three planes came to Duranmin the first day. They came to see this, all these people lying where they had fallen. They were calling out and crying, and bringing all sorts of their religious relics: human bones and other things [to be exposed and destroyed].

The missionaries came, there were three MAF planes that landed, and important Australians came. They didn't say much, just 'God is with His people. We believe God is with you. God has given something big to you. He has repaid you something.'...

The whole day it continued on. There was no tiredness, there was no feeling hungry or thirsty or sleepy. It went on three full weeks. We were just happy and singing songs, like that day and night, on and on...The missionaries asked me when I would come back to Telefomin, and I said, 'That's up to God; when He says it's time to come to Telefomin, I'll come.'

The missionaries went back, and we two stayed three weeks. Then God said, 'Okay, go to Telefomin.' We two went to Telefomin, and then revival broke in Telefomin. Revival broke in Eliptaman when we went there. We went to Oksapmin and Tekin, and revival broke all over.

At that time, Satan's power was broken. The power of Afek was broken at that time. Every day after this, women could go inside of the spirit houses. They went and looked inside and saw what things were there; children could go inside. Everything that had been taboo for women to eat they were given to eat. Now everything became free because God had suppressed the power of Afek.

Two of the expatriate missionaries that Diyos mentioned wrote a report of this revival which was issued on March 27, 1977, only weeks after the revival "broke," and this report, together with a follow-up, was published in 1983. In a tone obviously conveying their belief that the occurrences were interventions of the Holy Spirit, they describe what happened following Imisap's visitation from Jesus on Monday, March 7. Their report adds detail to Diyos's accounts (Bennett and Smith 1983, 128):

Imisap related these experiences to the assembled bible school men and women next morning, and all were greatly concerned.

On the Wednesday evening, Diyos himself had a vision of himself, holding in his right hand a bunch of keys, and in his left hand, a number of locks. He was told in the vision that if he put the right key in the right lock, in a similar way he would be the key to open the way to a great movement of God's spirit in Duranmin.

Diyos immediately called the school together in the classroom, and related his experience to them. As he talked, a light appeared on his chest for a moment, and he experienced a burning sensation. The light then shifted to the chest of Mrs. Inaap (Imisap) and she went into a trance. She recovered from this a few hours later, and began confessing sin in her life. She experienced at least one more trance experience, and a period of further confession, but from the last trance she awoke with a real peace and the feeling of being completely filled with God's Spirit. The experience repeated itself in others, nine in all, that first night.

Meetings began, and have continued day and night with repeated experiences amongst students, and later, the Duranmin [Asabano] people themselves. Of the leaders of the group, the experience so far has come to Mandoken (Mandoip) [Mandi], who is Diyos's wife; Malanepnok, who is lecturer Keni's wife; and to Josie Bungsep, temporarily at Duranmin lecturing women students.

It is suggested that the Spirit's work is threefold:

1. A conviction experience—in which a person is suddenly overcome by a tremendous sense of guilt, and the 'trance' may be quiet, or extremely violent physically, with a great deal of crying out.
2. A confession experience—following the above, when a person sanely confesses sin in his/her life.
3. A filling experience—the final trance following what might be repetitions of (1) and (2), in which a person recovers with a tremendous sense of peace and joy.

Bennett and Smith (1983, 129) compare Diyos's ministry to that of John the Baptist. "He calls for, and pleads for repentance in the lives of all. He is almost exorcising sin in the lives of people." Yet Diyos himself never says that he has had an experience of God focused on his own sin and repentance that includes "conviction," "confession," and "filling" phases. Diyos's supernatural encounters begin with the assumption that any sin he has is already forgiven, and instead consist of messages from God on how, where, and when he is to do God's work. Rather than forgiveness, God repays Diyos's devotion with promotion, revealing a very different moral position that Diyos has with God compared to that of his followers.

Diyos's confidence that his moral association with God is settled also informs his sense of legitimacy in the church. Indeed, Australian missionaries acknowledge his legitimacy when they respond to his call to come and witness the revival's fluorescence. He has, in Burridge's (1969a) terms, become the "new man" who has gained equivalence with the whites. Diyos travels to surrounding groups, preaching and sparking similar revivals. Graduates of Diyos's college return to their home villages and surrounding areas, leading to the rapid Christianization of the region.

Yet Diyos, who must be regarded by his own standards as a moral success, began to have difficulties in the early 1990s, as chinks in his moral community, including the Asabano, his own people, and his church were revealed. As Burridge (1969a, 67) observes in his study of millenarian movements, "temptations and falterings...are

almost inevitably a part of a prophet's later experience." This, I suggest, is a danger inherent in identifying one's own will closely with that of a supernatural being.

In 1991, when Australian missionaries Chris and Jane Ganter began teaching at the college, they were very popular with the local people, but they became a threat to Diyos's position as principal of the college and leader of the community. Their newly-renovated house certainly had the most Western conveniences at Duranmin. Though the two are very amiable, it is understandable that Diyos felt their presence a challenge to his authority.

When I returned to Duranmin in 1994, I learned that after the Ganters came there was a fight with Diyos, because he had done something wrong. I heard rumors that Diyos had had an extramarital affair, and that the governing council for local churches had decided to remove him as principal. He broke off the affair and re-established good relations with his wife. However, he was suspended as principal and his rival, Chris Ganter, was appointed in his stead. Diyos was resentful and protested so vigorously that the Ganters moved the college to Olsobip.

I heard some say that Asabano people no longer trusted Diyos because, as one person explained, "He fights with white people, including Chris Ganter. When Chris was here, there were no problems with the airstrip, and the college and everything were well looked after. But Diyos got mad at him, and kicked them out." "Why?" I asked. "Because Diyos wanted to be boss." As founder and principal of the college, Diyos saw the newcomers—nominally part of his moral community—as disrespectful of his authority.

During a visit I made to Olsobip, the Ganters told me that Diyos had confessed to an affair with a young Eliptaman woman, and it was decided to suspend him as principal. It happened in January, 1992, and was found out in March, whereupon the Min Baptist Union, based in Telefomin, suspended him as principal for rest of the year. Mandi left him and stayed in the nearby town of Tabubil for three months, after which they reconciled. The Ganters said that the Baptist Union of Papua New Guinea (BUPNG) extended the suspension for another year as a result of belligerent letters Diyos wrote during his initial suspension, but the Min Baptist Union awarded him one thousand kina compensation in hopes of appeasing him. Nevertheless, at the November, 1993 graduation ceremony, 20 months after the suspension, Diyos said in his address that if he were not reinstated as principal they would have to pay fifty thousand kina compensation and he would shut down the college. Because of Diyos's lack of humility, the BUPNG decided to permanently remove him as principal and move the college.

According to John Drury, an ABMS missionary at Telefomin, Diyos had asked repeatedly for help with the college, and when the Ganters came to help, it became clear that they were better trained to organize the school. This caused problems because it meant Diyos was no longer the main authority at Duranmin. Later, when his personal difficulties became known, the church council suspended him as principal for three months, during which he was to make amends with the woman's family and compensate them. After three months passed without action the church removed him as principal. Then, according to Drury, he became very angry and was accused of letting pigs destroy the students' gardens. The Ganters responded to the lack of food by sending the students home. Diyos then claimed that all the

school property, including items in the Ganters' house, was his as compensation. The Ganters left Duranmin for a time, but returned one day when Diyos was away and flew out as many of the college's possessions as they could carry. The Ganters re-opened the college in its new location in 1993.

Diyos concluded his account to me by describing his continuing difficulties in relations with the church authorities. He complained about how he had been treated by white missionaries. "They understand that I'm a churchman from God to here, to save the people here, but they did not respect me." Diyos lamented the deterioration of the church and his relationship with the Asabano.

We had one church, and they [the Asabano] stayed close to us, but now the life of the church isn't like before. When I ask them to meet down below [at the main church on the former college campus], just a few will come. Pastor Wani told us that the people are losing interest in church. They don't always meet for services, and they don't listen and are somewhat willful. Before, the people feared God, and stayed nearby. Now, they say, 'Forget it, I'll just do as I please.'

The life of the people today has changed. There isn't rejoicing, and the word has been forgotten...It's not just here, the whole church is the same....All over today you will see that among women it is active, but on the men's side it's not very strong. The church administration is also not very strong, because some of the women have problems, and I am somewhat down now. Some church leaders like me also have problems with money and all sorts of things. The church isn't like when the revival first happened. I think about us here, but in other places also, I see the church's work is in the same state. Last Easter I was in Eliptaman, at two churches, and I saw there the same kind of sickness as here....

If there is rejoicing, then people come frequently, and if I want to conduct a project, it's hard for me to get men to come. For example, asking them to come cut grass on the airstrip is hard. One or two will come, but many won't come. So both, the Telefolmin and the Asabano, are the same.

Diyos had conflicts with the local people over what he called "many small things." He explained that when he had first arrived people were welcoming and cooperative, and the Asabano and Telefolmin had lived together. However, the ethnic division between the two groups became increasingly problematic, as when the Asabano expected to have a greater share of paid work. There were also resentments over the loss of a portable sawmill that had been loaned by the Telefomin Baptist Association, for which some Asabano blamed Diyos, or accused him of favoring the Telefolmin over the Asabano. Diyos continued in English,

So small things...build up, but I explained to the people like this, I say, 'You see, people, you have to understand, because I am come here because God sent me here. So you have to obey me when I'm saying you have to come and work together, and I try to help you people.'...

And they said, 'This ground belongs to us, and not you, but this river Ilim, the other side is yours but this side is ours, and you have to give us these buildings.' And I said, 'These buildings belong to God, and you have to wait and see, I don't know what God is going to say to me, if he says to give the buildings to the people, I'll give them to the people. But

I cannot give you *nating* [without authorization], because these buildings belong to God, and I'll wait for God, and do what he tells me to do. So I cannot give you—these houses don't belong to Duranmin [Asabano] and they don't belong to Telefol. I'll wait for God to say something.' ...

So the thinking of the people in the village is different from those who have been to school. Hard to correct their minds: very difficult. So they say, 'You're selfish,' but I didn't live in the ex-college house [where the Ganters lived], I'm living in my house over on the other side. ... So because this sort of small things makes my family unhappy: not respect.

While Robbins (1998, 57) says that the Min people never regarded Diyos as a prophet, he clearly thinks of himself as having a prophetic relationship with God, the one to whom God will reveal what the fate of the college buildings should be. In spite of his difficulties, in 1995 Diyos remained the *de facto* leader of the Duranmin area.

Diyos's 2005 Update

In 2005 I visited Duranmin for the first time in 10 years. I found Diyos remained a strong leader in the community, now living in the mission residence on the grounds of the former college, which had become a Telefol village. In the Asabano community, the ambivalent mix of simmering resentment and respectful acknowledgement toward Diyos remained. Diyos complained, both to me and to community members during a Baptist service in the Asabano village of Yakob, that some of the statements made of him and his family, and recorded in my dissertation, were not true. He chided the Asabano for having spread "false stories" about him. His speech was received with apparent nonchalance. Some reaffirmed to me that neither they nor I had misrepresented anything.

There is a risk, in documenting a contentious history such as this, to fall into an endless exchange of "he said—she said's." Each actor wishes to have the last word. Moreover, the events and consequences surrounding Diyos's career continue to unfold, allowing continuing opportunities for contested interpretations and "I-told-you-so's." Nevertheless, it is only reasonable that since this is Diyos's story, he be allowed the opportunity to rebut what others have said of him. On August 21, 2005, I recorded his concerns in Tok Pisin.

Diyos began by stressing that the Ganters had not built the college buildings or residence. Chris Ganter had not brought development—Diyos had. Accusations that Diyos had fought with Chris Ganter and driven out the college were untrue. Diyos's "mistake" was not taking a second wife, as some had implied.

I did sleep with a woman once, but I didn't marry her. When this happened I consulted the church advisors in Australia. They knew about me, and gave me two years probation; that's our Baptist custom. If a man does something wrong, he must leave work. After two years I wanted to work again, but Chris and other leaders wouldn't let me. After this there was much talk back and forth, and they said, 'Forget it, let's move the college.' When they did this, they didn't notify me. When Chris went to get approval from local authorities [to move the college to] Olsobip, he fell and broke his arm.

The local official gave permission. Then they then held a Min Baptist Union meeting. (Before they called it Sepik Baptist Union). They held the meeting at Tekin, and when Chris went to the meeting he fell down and broke his leg. This was a sign; it had a cause: Chris thought incorrectly [*kranki*] of me and of removing the college. And God, Father God, He gave punishment to him at that time, to his arm and his leg, and he saw this.

When the meeting was finished [Chris and two other churchmen] came. They came and took away the college. And we held a big meeting here. And I said, 'If you take the college to Olsobib, and the college turns out well, and your work goes ahead, then I will know this is God's plan. If you take it and mess it up [*bagarapim*], it's not God's plan, but your own will. Another thing, too: if you take it near the Ok Tedi [Mining, Ltd.] Company, you think the company will give you...good materials for buildings, but,' I said, 'I think this won't happen.' So I said, '[If] you all go mess up the college, the finger of God will be on you. You will all be at fault in the eyes of God. It won't be my fault. If the college progresses well, I will know that God spoke to you to take the college over there...' So after I spoke to them..., they went down and talked to the company about donating roofing and lumber and they said no. So, they built the college and it stayed a short time, and Chris left! He went to Australia. He received notice.

Now the college was messed up [*bagarap*]. And [they] admitted that what I had said was true...'It wasn't the will of God. It was just the will of we men.' Now they felt very ashamed and the college was messed up. It was, how many years? And now again they tried taking it [elsewhere, this time] to Tekin. Now it was doing well, but I think after trying and trying it is now deteriorating. And I said, 'You all take it [the college] around, one day it will come back to it's place of origin [*asples*].'...

I started this [mission and college]. I got the money from ABMS through my own efforts and built this [mission] house. It wasn't Chris. When they took away the college, I said, 'Okay, but not the buildings.' Later I disassembled the houses and gave five houses to the Asabano...So this claim that some Asabano make that we [Telefolmin] have nice houses and they don't isn't true. I gave them the building materials from the college and acquired money for the roofing on Yakob's as well as [Telefolmin] village churches at Duranmin.

Diyos went on to enumerate his many accomplishments in the community, including establishing the medical aid post, the community school, and the airstrip. "The Asabano don't know that I am like one of their fathers; instead, they say, 'Diyos messed us and everything up.' This is not true. Their thoughts and feelings are not correct."

In Diyos's corrective statement, he provides more information on how one is to distinguish the will of humans from that of God. He interprets injuries suffered by his rival, and the failure of the college to thrive as divine retribution. His own actions, not those of his detractors, brought advancement for the mission community. As rewarding developments, they recognizably reflect God's approval. While admitting his mistake, he considers his debt to society paid by having accepted his two-year suspension. Subsequent lacks in Duranmin's development and any unequal distribution of wealth between Asabano and Telefolmin are either the fault of others or exaggerated. Evidently, he decided that God's will was to divide the former college buildings between the Asabano and the Telefolmin, yet even this did not satisfy the

Asabano. Asabano complaints against him therefore appear to him as inaccurate and lacking cognizance of his paternal position.

These developments illustrate how much the assigning of divine will depends upon interpretation, and interpretations are always positioned, always biased. In all human societies they are multiple and may be contested. In the cross-cultural and multiethnic moral communities that missionaries oversee and extend, the potential for adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing assignments of divine and human wills becomes all the greater.

Merging Wills with God, Diverging Wills in the Moral Community

This account of Diyos's career allows us to assess some of Burrridge's generalizations about the moral and motivational position of missionaries. Burrridge's work concerns religion's ability to offer salvation from an undesirable condition, defining it as "a set of assumptions about power which [bear] upon a particular redemptive process" (1969a, 47). In accord with this view, Burrridge (1991, 74) writes of Christian missionaries for whom "the experience of being 'saved' themselves impelled them to the task of saving others." Diyos did not recount his initial salvation experience beyond telling us that he became convinced that Christianity is true. Nor did an experience of being saved motivate his mission; rather, he sought to further God's and his own desire to achieve a prestigious revival under his leadership.

Burrridge sees missionaries as exemplars of "generalized individuality", by which he means standing outside a given moral order to critique and reform it (1979, 17). Paradoxically, however, missionaries often do this by suppressing their individual wills in obedience of vocations from the deity, who is the source of their community's moral orientation. Diyos portrays his early career as an exercise in obedience; only later does his individuality, identified with the will of God, take on strength. Thus, the issue is further complicated when missionaries like Diyos come to see their wills as reflecting that of their gods. In Burrridge's sense, individuality stands in contrast to obedience; however, insofar as missionaries consider themselves to share the voice or will of their god, who is their society's ultimate moral referent, the distinction between individuality and obedience becomes blurred. This blurring, which occurred over Diyos's career, appears to have caused his faltering when it became apparent to other members of his moral community.

Diyos's case suggests the following model of missionary morality. The missionary calling is a drive to offer redemption to others as an act of obedience, through which one attains redemption for oneself by deepening one's love relationship with the deity. This love is expressed as submission to the deity's charisma, and is rewarded by becoming, like the deity, the focal persona for the devotion of one's charges. Missionaries thus place themselves in a position where they expect the obedience and respect of others, even as they are offering these to their god. This breeds a psychologically problematic contradiction: it becomes easy at times to identify one's own views as the deity's, so that one in effect feels as though one is obeying another when in fact one is following one's own will.

This problem, which might have remained below the surface indefinitely, became a crisis for the moral community only when Diyos began to act in defiance of his colleagues. The catalyst was Diyos's sin of adultery, a common human failing that Christians consider forgivable through repentance. Diyos appeared to his fellows to be insufficiently repentant and unaccepting of censure. This brought to the surface Diyos's questionable view that he stood above others in his moral community because of his special relationship with God.

While Burridge has identified a number of important moral characteristics of the missionary enterprise, these tend to be positively biased. Adding to the points already discussed, I concur with Tonkinson (this volume) that Burridge exaggerates the degree of cross-cultural empathy of many missionaries. Though Diyos did exhibit empathy, he also tended toward an exclusive paternalism based on his close identification with God.

In summary, Diyos became intellectually convinced of God's existence, and therefore followed the church's moral obligation to accept God into his life. He met this obligation over the years through faithfully obeying his teachers, his missionaries, and especially his god. Diyos offered his faithful obedience in exchange for being given the key to lead a powerful "revival". In this role, selfless generosity and personal desire were simultaneously fulfilled, for surely a revival was what God wanted, too. Diyos's and God's desires converged. From Diyos's perspective, God gained souls, and repaid Diyos with honor and respect. The win-win of a satisfying exchange is an important subtext to this autobiography, as it is in all Melanesian sociality.

This is why Diyos was so disturbed by the lack of respect shown him by the white missionaries and the Asabano when he faltered: he was not paid back properly. What caused this exchange to go awry? Since Diyos never describes his own sinfulness and repenting, it is possible that he was used to thinking of himself as basically blameless because he had been forgiven for any human failings through Jesus' sacrifice. Always placing himself in the position of the leader exhorting others to repent before God, he seems to have allowed himself to consider his own social and spiritual position secure. This security would only have been strengthened by Diyos's belief that through obeying God, one becomes more like God (and God is the ultimate agent of generalized individuality). Even after losing his position as college principal, when the Asabano were clambering to use the wood from the former college buildings, Diyos assumed that God would tell him—and no one else—what the fate of these buildings should be. This shows, I think, that Diyos considered himself to have earned an irrevocable social and spiritual grace through having held up his part of the exchange.

Conclusion

As Diyos tells it, he became a missionary in order to fully engage in an exchange relationship with God and to do good to the point of merging his own will with God's. Through this dynamic, the line between being the obedient servant and the powerful individual became blurred.

On the whole, Diyos handled this difficulty, which I have argued is inherent in missionary positionality, with skill and humility. He encouraged others to prophesy. However, his pride at being God's apparent chosen one for such important work eventually manifested in viewing himself as God's exclusive local prophet.

It would seem that Diyos fell into a trap that so commonly snares otherwise beneficent religious prophets and founders: they believe their relationship with their deity, the center and source of their morality, is so intimate and special that their own will comes to seem, if only in some moments, inseparable from that of their god. This drives a wedge into the moral code once shared by the missionary and his or her flock, sundering the unity of the moral community. Ironically, the common foible of pride can become cancerous when it happens to those who are the most public in their efforts to do what they consider morally good for humankind.

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 9

“In the Way” in Melanesia: Modernity and the New Woman in Papua New Guinea as Catholic Missionary Sister

Nancy C. Lutkehaus

Introduction

Nuns, we are told, are an endangered species. In the United States, their median age is sixty-nine and since their peak in 1965, when Catholic sisters numbered 185,000, there has been a declining number of new recruits. By 2005 the number of sisters had dropped to 69,963, causing some of the five hundred Catholic orders that once existed here to disappear (Briggs 2006, 1; Gordon 2002; see also Fialka 2003). Why should this be a cause of alarm, especially to non-Catholics, in an increasingly secular world? On the one hand, as John Fialka (2003) points out, nuns, who have outnumbered priests three to one in the United States, have played an integral role in American history, in particular, in the settling of the west, as it was nuns who not only taught in parochial schools, but worked in private hospitals and at Catholic charities, institutions that served not only Catholics, but countless immigrants and citizens from all walks of life and all religious denominations. Moreover, for a long stretch of American history, as a group nuns were the best educated women in the nation (Briggs 2006, 3).

On the other hand, for many young women, the opportunity to be a nun—even when it entailed taking vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to God as well as a male religious hierarchy—offered an opportunity for adventure, education, a career, and an alternative to the traditional roles of wife and mother (Briggs, 2006, 3). As Fialka notes, “nuns were [America’s] first feminists” (2003, 1). While some traditional feminists, old and new, might take exception with this statement, it is true, nonetheless, that a nun working in the 19th century on the American frontier or a 20th century missionary nun working in a country far from her home of origin in Europe or the United States, often experienced situations that allowed her a great degree of autonomy from men and the opportunity to wield institutional authority that many of her married counterparts would never attain.

Indeed, it is the missionary orders such as Mother Theresa’s Missionaries of Charity and the Missionary Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit, the focus of the present article, that have continued actively and successfully to recruit new

members.¹ However, the demographics and locale where young women are recruited from has changed. As we will see with the case of the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit in Papua New Guinea, novitiates increasingly come from the very countries this German order was originally sent to missionize: the Philippines, India, Brazil, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and so forth. Likewise, when Mother Teresa died, an Indian nun replaced her as the congregation's Superior General. While young women who have grown up in the United States and Europe, with its increased economic and social freedoms for women, may no longer find the thought of a life of celibacy and dedication to simplicity and hard work an attractive or necessary alternative to marriage and motherhood or spinsterhood and poverty, for many young women in Third World and developing countries, the choice of career as a missionary nun does still represent new opportunities for personal freedom, economic security, and middle-class respectability, acceptable to both themselves and their families.

In the case study of one such young Papua New Guinean woman that follows we will see in detail some of the considerations that may have motivated her to choose to become a missionary nun and her family and community to accept, indeed to welcome and honor, her decision. The case study takes as an analytic framework some of the terminology developed by Kenelm Burridge in his anthropological investigation and analysis of the culture of Christian missionaries. In applying the terms *metanoia*, Christian contrariness, community, secularization, and adaptation that Burridge identified as key elements in his description of missionary culture in general, I hope to show their utility in understanding a phenomenon that Burridge did not consider in his original study: that of an indigenous female missionary from a contemporary Third World country. I do so through a focus on one particular event: a mission-sending ceremony held in the natal village of Sister Gabriella, a young Papua New Guinean missionary sister embarking on her first foreign posting to Africa. In addition to presenting a case study of one individual, I also analyze the changing culture of the Catholic mission-sending order, the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit, to which Sister Gabriella belongs. Ultimately, I am interested in shedding light on the changing nature of the constituency of the order, as well as describing some of the continuities that its new multicultural membership share with its earlier more homogeneous community comprised primarily of European women.

Encountering Catholic Missionaries in Papua New Guinea

In the prologue to *Mambu*, Kenelm Burridge's classic study of Melanesian millenarianism, he recounts an event he observed one evening while visiting a village on Manam, a small island off the north coast of Papua New Guinea, where, according to the priest at the nearby Catholic mission, the inhabitants avoided the mission church assiduously:

1 For example, the Missionaries of Charity have 615 houses with 4,400 sisters working in more than a hundred countries (Hofmann 2002, 61). At present, the Missionary Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit have 3,500 members working in 41 countries. See also, Briggs (2006, 9).

When the dance was over...the villagers lined up in front of Irakau's house for night prayers... The prayers, as I heard them, were the standard night prayers taken from the Catholic prayer book... A renegade catechist, a mission teacher who refused to have anything more to do with the mission, led them.

'You see,' the Luluai remarked, 'we are not bad people. We are all good Catholics. Only this—we want to say our prayers for ourselves.'

Remembering the priest's words about the Baliau villagers' lack of interest in the Catholic Church and the mission's activities, Burrridge was surprised to see them lining up for prayers, and even more surprised to hear that the prayers they recited were those in the Catholic prayer book (Burrridge 1960, 7).²

I mention this anecdote from 1952 because it is emblematic of the ambivalent attitude and relationship that Manam islanders, and many other New Guinea people, have had to Christianity and the various missionary groups who have settled and worked among them. Although they had no choice as to the initial arrival of the missionaries, in the ensuing half century since Burrridge visited Manam, the islanders' relationship to the Catholic Church has gone through cycles of attraction and repulsion, with some villagers rejecting Catholicism in favor of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. More recently, missionary linguists from the Wycliffe Bible Translators/Summer Institute of Linguistics and the Four Square Evangelical Church, as well as their own indigenous "new" religions inspired by the work of Yali and other millenarian-like charismatic leaders have competed for the islanders' attention (Lutkehaus 1990; 1995).

Simultaneously, the Catholic Church, and in particular, the Society of the Divine Word missionaries (Societatis Verbi Divini or SVD) and their female counterpart, the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS), have been transformed: first as a result of World War II, then Vatican II, and now more recent transnational political, social, and economic events which have had a global impact, especially on transnational organizations such as churches and missions.

Drawing on archival research, fieldwork and filmmaking conducted in PNG and Europe in 1978-79, 1980, and 1994, I investigate in this chapter the interconnected issues of morality and modernity in Melanesia as refracted through the changing roles and constituency of Catholic missionary nuns in Papua New Guinea. My fieldwork began in 1978 on Manam, with a period of time in Germany in 1980 and 1981, and again in 1994, in both Papua New Guinea and Europe.³ Throughout, I focused on only one denomination, the Catholic Church, and one missionary order, the Society of the Divine Word and its sister organization, the Society of Holy Spirit Sisters. Fieldwork comprised participant-observation and interviews with sisters at convents

2 After completing his fieldwork in Tangu in 1952, Burrridge visited Manam Island where he spent a fortnight at the Bieng Catholic mission. While there he visited the nearby village of Baliau where a local leader named Irakau, inspired by the Rai Coast leader, Yali, was stirring up anti-missionary sentiment. For more about Yali, see Peter Lawrence's classic study *Road Belong Cargo* (1964).

3 My fieldwork was funded by the Deutsches Akademischer Austausch Dienst (1980 and 1981), the Wenner-Gren Foundation (1994), and a Zumberg Faculty Innovation Grant (1994).

and mission stations in Papua New Guinea, including Timbunke, Goroka, Bogia, Alexishafen, Manam, and Dagua. I also carried out research at SVD monasteries in Saint Augustin and Bad Driburg, Germany as well as the SSsP convents of Wimbern and Steyl in Germany and the Netherlands, the SSsP Mother House in Rome.

I also draw here upon Burridge's most recent work, *In the Way: A Study of Christian Missionary Endeavours* (1991), in which he investigates missionaries as a particular subculture of individuals intent upon building Christian communities within larger, complex, and often secular societies. However, while Burridge has focused his analytic attention exclusively upon European missionaries, like Lohmann in the preceding chapter, I hope here to show that many of his insights about missionaries and the communities they create apply cross-culturally as well. Indeed, I suggest that one way in which missionary organizations that traditionally were exclusively European or Euro-American in make up, have adapted to global demographic, historical, and social changes has been to incorporate new members from the very groups that they formerly excluded.

Like Burridge, my introduction to fieldwork and to Papua New Guineans was facilitated by the presence of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) missionaries in the region.⁴ In 1978, before I had even had a chance to visit Manam Island, the Catholic Sisters at the Bogia mission station on the coast across from Manam insisted that I be taken up to the Tangu mission station to visit Father J. A. Z'graggen, an SVD priest trained in linguistics who had conducted a survey of the languages of the Ramu/Bogia region.⁵ Z'graggen, as one might suspect, was a bit surprised when I arrived unannounced at his doorstep, since he was going to have to put me up for the night, but he was eager to have an interested listener as he showed me his map and described his linguistic work. This was my first direct exposure to a "bush" mission station and the isolated lifestyle of a missionary priest/scholar, a type that the SVD order has historically cultivated in its mission work worldwide. The trip was also one of my first solo adventures in Papua New Guinea and an opportunity to visit the area where Burridge had conducted ethnographic research for *Mambu* (1960) and *Tangu Traditions* (1969b).

Burridge's Analysis of Missionaries

Burridge's study of missionaries, *In the Way* (1991), attempts to provide an anthropological analysis of Christian missionaries of various denominations as both a social class and what he identifies as a "metaculture."⁶ He also aims to develop a

4 The SVD missionaries and the Holy Spirit Sisters arrived in this part of New Guinea in 1896, soon after Germany had annexed the northern portion of New Guinea in 1884. Given their lengthy presence in Papua New Guinea, much has been written about the work of the SVD missionaries there by historians, anthropologists, and the missionaries themselves. See, for example, Huber (1988), Huber and Lutkehaus (1999) Lutkehaus (1983), Wiltgen (1969).

5 See Z'graggen (1973). I still have the well-worn copy of the linguistic map he had compiled that he gave me as a guide to the area.

6 Burridge calls Christianity a metaculture because "while the main elements of the faith are reasonably consistent and uniform, their inculturation or emergences into culture

theory of missionary practice. His goal is to describe the inner logic of missionaries' activities within the context of their Christian faith and the varieties of community they have organized. His theory, he suggests, is valid for all Christian missionaries, regardless of historical moment, geographical location, cultural background or religious denomination (1991, ix).

Interestingly, the book also represents a synthesis of much of Burridge's career and work as an anthropologist. Thus, for example, he dedicates *In the Way* to all missionaries, but in particular, he mentions Father Cornelius van Baar, a Society of the Divine Word missionary whom Burridge first met in 1952 while conducting anthropological research in Tangu. Van Baar and the other SVD missionaries whom Burridge encountered in New Guinea were one group of Europeans who contributed ideas and models to the Tangu and other New Guineans that played an important part in indigenous constructions of "the New Man," Burridge's term for the central subject of much of his ethnographic as well as theoretical work on Melanesian millenarian movements during the middle period of his career (Burridge 1960). Finally, *In the Way* builds upon Burridge's theoretical work on the individual in relationship to society that he developed in *Someone, No One: An Essay on Individuality* (1979). The research he conducted for *In the Way* allowed Burridge to return to the Pacific and to fieldwork—this time to Australia, a society that he had previously written about in his book *Encountering Aborigines* (1973), to observe and interview missionaries at work there, as well as to India where he interviewed the Noble laureate missionary Mother Theresa and observed the work of her Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta.⁷

Burridge purposely chose a title for his book whose double entendre underscores the ambiguity of missionaries and their endeavor. For missionaries can be characterized as having been quite literally "in the way," sticking their noses into other people's business, so to speak, because they are committed to making changes in people's lives. And, they are committed to making changes precisely because of their Christian beliefs and principles. To become a missionary is to believe in the

differentiate into denominational, sectarian, and culturally diversified versions, which then become 'religions'" (1991, xiv).

7 Burridge's research for *In the Way* was supported by a Guggenheim fellowship. In the book he mentions that when he first approached a funding agency for support for his research on missionaries, he was told that a focus on such a group was "outside the proper interests of anthropologists"; it was, rather, the purview of historians (1991, xii). Similarly, when I proposed to carry out fieldwork during the summer after my first year in graduate school in lowland Peru studying the Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translators, a group of evangelical missionaries based at Yarinacocha, my proposal was also met with initial skepticism. This time not from my funding sources (the Institute for Intercultural Studies in New York City), but from my advisor at Columbia University, Robert Murphy, who was worried that I might offend the missionaries, who were important contacts in that region of South America, for anthropologists who desired to work in the Amazon. Murphy's assumption, of course, was that I was going to write an expose about the missionaries. That task was taken up by David Stoll, whom I had met that summer, who subsequently wrote an expose about the work of the SIL missionaries in Latin America (1982). I wrote instead about the gender dynamics of the missionaries, many of whom were single, middle-aged women, and the attractions that missionary life held for these women.

redemptive value of Christianity and a Christian way of life. Thus, by way of making their lives an example, missionaries choose to live in the Christian way.

As part of his theory of missionaries, Burridge identifies a model of what he calls “The Christian Systemic,” a schematic description of Christianity as a belief system and practice (1991, 63). His aim is to show how the missionary endeavor fits with and reflects this broader Christian systemic. Key terms that Burridge identifies as relevant to the missionary process include *metanoia*, Christian contrariness, community, secularization and adaptation.⁸ I will discuss each term briefly and use them to describe and illuminate the behavior of one particular indigenous Papua New Guinea nun as well as the beliefs and values of her missionary order.

It is particularly appropriate to apply these terms to an in-depth analysis and understanding of one specific individual since a central point in Burridge’s theory of missionary endeavor is the idea that a missionary is not simply a person, but, more significantly, what he chooses to call an *individual*. Burridge insists that the term *individual* must be italicized in order to indicate its special nature distinct from the usual usage associated with the term individual. Here he takes up an idea that he first developed in his book, *Someone, No One: An Essay on Individuality* (1979). An *individual*, according to Burridge, contrasts with an ordinary person in that the *individual* is a person who has undergone an experience, or set of experiences, that entail significant personal transformation. For the missionary, the nature of this experience is metaculturally specific—it entails both conversion—a desire for moral renewal through a belief in Christian love and service—and recognition of a calling as a missionary as the means to fulfill both personal and social moral renewal. Thus, it also entails the rejection of a previous way of life and a decision that the missionary endeavor is right for her. *Metanoia* is the Greek term that Christian scholars use technically to refer to the complete transformation of heart and mind—and often a reversal of previous dispositions and practices—that leads to the conversion of an individual to Christianity (Burridge 1991, 43). In the case of missionaries, their *metanoia* also entails their decision to follow a missionary calling, thus rejecting their former secular way of life for a new lifestyle and a new form of community.⁹

Sister Gabriella’s Calling

A transformation of such major proportions does not occur easily or necessarily quickly. Among other things, I hope to provide an example of this process of missionary *metanoia* through a discussion of the reasons one young Papua New Guinea woman, Sister Gabriella, decided to become a missionary nun.¹⁰ I also want to describe the subsequent social ramifications of Gabriella’s very personal decision

8 The terms “Christian Contrariness,” “Community,” and “Secularization and Adaptation” are the titles of separate chapters in Burridge’s *In the Way*. I have lifted them directly from his book and use them as organizing concepts for my discussion of indigenous missionary nuns in PNG.

9 Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus is perhaps the best-known example of *metanoia*. See also Dirksen (1932) on *metanoia*.

10 Sister Gabriella is a pseudonym used to protect the sister’s true identity.

for two different communities—her family of origin, the Iatmul of Tambunam, and her family of choice, the Servants of the Holy Spirit. I do so through an analysis of the ritual “marriage” that occurred between Sister Gabriella and the SSpS order with which she was committing to live the rest of her life. By social ramifications I mean the effects of Sister Gabriella’s decision to become a missionary nun for both the Iatmul and the Servants of the Holy Spirit.

I met Gabriella in the summer of 1994 at the SSpS convent in Alexishafen, the Catholic mission headquarters located a few miles west of the coastal town of Madang in Papua New Guinea. She was one of five young Papua New Guinea women, the first cohort of indigenous women novitiates being trained to become SSpS nuns. Our entrée into the convent and our interaction with this particular group was facilitated by the fact that I had known one of the novitiates since she was a young girl. Her family lived in the village on Manam Island where I had carried out my initial fieldwork and her father was a man I had known quite well as he was the younger brother of the chief, or *tanepoa labalaba*, in the village.¹¹

Gabriella was of particular interest to us as she was one of the first indigenous Papua New Guinea men or women to have been given a mission assignment to Africa by the Catholic Church. Soon after the events that I describe here occurred, Sister Gabriella left PNG for the first time in her life. She traveled first to Rome and then to an SVD mission in northern Ghana.

Metanoia and Christian Contrariness: The “New Woman” in Melanesia

Society of the Divine Word missionaries arrived in the German colony of New Guinea in 1896, twelve years after Germany had annexed the northern portion of the eastern half of the island of New Guinea. The Catholic SVD missionaries divided the territory of Kaiser Wilhelmsland, as German New Guinea was then called, between themselves and the German Lutheran missionaries.¹² By 1914, the SVD missionaries had developed extensive plantations as well as rudimentary educational and health facilities. After Germany lost her New Guinea colony along with her other colonial possessions following the First World War, the Australians allowed the SVD to remain.

Up until World War II, the SVD missionaries and SSpS sisters maintained the most efficient and effective systems of transportation, communication and social welfare in the territory. Largely because of their industriousness, they had worked out a symbiotic, even amiable, relationship with the Australian administration. However, SSpS sisters were sometimes at loggerheads with the Australian patrol officers as they sought to protect young village women from unwanted marriages

11 For more details about Manam Island society and my research there, including reference to the impact of the SVD priests and SSpS sisters on the islanders, see Lutkehaus (1995).

12 German Lutheran missionaries arrived in German New Guinea in 1886, two years after Germany had annexed the northern portion of New Guinea in 1884 and Methodists had been in New Britain even earlier. See Lutkehaus (1983) for more discussion of the early years of the SVD missionaries in New Guinea.

and other forms of mistreatment, thus setting themselves up as advocates of the village women and as models of strength and courage in the face of domineering men, whether indigenous or white.¹³

During World War II many SVD priests and sisters, seventy-five percent of whom were German, chose to remain in Papua New Guinea after the Japanese began to occupy the territory in January of 1942. Rather than being seen as allies of the Japanese, as the Australians had assumed the German nationals might be, the Japanese considered the missionaries to be enemies. Many of them were eventually either killed by the Japanese or by American bombers as they were being shipped to a Japanese military base.¹⁴ After World War II ended, those SVD priests and SSps sisters who had not been killed during the war returned to New Guinea. They remained a dominant institutional and religious force on the north coast of PNG and in the highlands (where they had expanded during the 1930s) after Papua New Guinea became independent in 1975. Thus, for over one hundred years, the SVD and SSps missionaries have been present in Papua New Guinea serving not only as religious leaders, but as nurses, teachers and employers for several generations of Papua New Guinea villagers. Until the late colonial period when the incipient nation, with the aid of the Australian administration, began to establish its own educational system, the mission schools set up throughout the hinterland were the only source of elementary and secondary education available to rural villagers.

As a result of Independence in 1975 a wide range of new opportunities for employment in the business and government sectors were created for educated young Papua New Guinea men and women. Why then, one might wonder, in 1994 when educated young women in Papua New Guinea had been engaged in secular careers as teachers, nurses, doctors, airline hostesses, secretaries and clerks, etc. for almost two decades, would Sister Gabriella have been interested in becoming a missionary nun? There is not an easy answer to this question. In asking Gabriella to talk about her decision to become a nun, she inevitably also talked about her desire to become a member of the Holy Spirit Sisters order, for the two were inextricably bound together.

Growing up in Papua New Guinea during the period of decolonization and independence, and attending the Catholic high school in Wewak in the 1980s, Gabriella was exposed to nuns from a number of different orders, not all of which were mission-sending organizations. She was also exposed to the rhetoric and reality of new beginnings, new roles, new challenges and new desires for a post-independence PNG. Thus, while in part it may have been the idea of travel, of going to visit new places that appealed to her about becoming a missionary, it was not *simply* that. Before she became a nun, she had already traveled. She had been a

13 See Lutkehaus (1999) for more details of the SSps sisters' pre-World War II behavior at the SVD mission on Manam Island.

14 The Divine Word Missionaries calculated that 53% of the SVD and SSps missionaries working in PNG were killed during the war (Divine Word Missionaries 1969, 55). See Huber (1988, 130-133) for details of the Japanese occupation of PNG and the Japanese treatment of the SVD missionaries.

teacher. She had lived in the highlands and she had taught in government schools in Chimbu Province and Mt. Hagen.

However, the notion that she could become a missionary herself appears to have been planted in her mind at a very early age. She recounts how when she was a young girl, probably eight or nine, one of her Catholic teachers, an Australian woman who was a missionary, had told her and her classmates that one of them might become a missionary just like herself. Gabriella recalled feeling very angry when she heard these words. When I asked her why, she said it was because she didn't think it was really possible that she or one of her other classmates—village children from rural Papua New Guinea, and especially those of them who were girls—could ever actually become a missionary like the white women from Europe and Australia and the United States who were their teachers.

This reference to a childhood memory is of interest. Like Gabriella, the indigenous missionary Diyos, whom Lohmann discusses in the previous chapter, also recounted early childhood memories of the teachings he received in bible school as important factors in his decision to convert to Christianity and to become a pastor. In studies of autobiographical texts written by *European* missionaries, childhood memories are not usually mentioned; but when they are, it is usually women rather than men who mention them (Mikaelsson n.d.)¹⁵

Obviously, somewhere deep inside Gabriella, the idea that she too might become a missionary struck a responsive chord. For one thing, she chose to become a teacher herself. Several years later, after she had graduated from high school, taught school in the highlands and returned to the coast to teach in Madang, she felt restless and somehow dissatisfied. There had been pressure put on her by her family to marry, and there had been one young man whom she had thought about marrying. In the end it did not work out and Gabriella said that she was glad that she had not married him.

Reading about the work of the SSps nuns in the SVD publication, *The Word*, she wrote away to an address in Australia and asked to receive more information about the Sister's organization. In response, she was given the name of two sisters at Alexishafen, the headquarters of the SVD and SSps orders in PNG.

But, Gabriella says, she didn't contact these women immediately. She hesitated to meet them directly, she said, because "she wanted to be able to make a free choice." She didn't want, she said, "to feel as though she was being forced" to join the order. So, instead, she thought privately and deeply about what it might be like to be a nun and a missionary.

Unlike the indigenous missionary Diyos, whom Lohmann describes in the previous chapter, there was not, according to Gabriella, a specific moment of sudden revelation, no one dramatic point at which she was inspired or received a transcendent vision or experienced an uncanny insight. Eventually, after visiting and observing

15 In an unpublished paper, "A Time for Sowing the Seeds of Heaven: Depictions of Childhood in Autobiographical Writings by Norwegian Missionaries," the Norwegian scholar of childhood, Lisbeth Mikaelsson (n.d.), presents an interesting discussion of the gendered differences in childhood reminiscences of missionary men and women.

the Sisters at Alexishafen over an extended period of time, she decided to apply to become a novitiate.

Her family was initially opposed to her becoming a nun, as they wanted her to marry. But she persevered. No longer living at home, earning her own income, she was able to support herself and to persuade her family of the strength of her convictions.

In 1991, the year she took her final vows at the convent house in Alexishafen, several of her family members came from Tambunam to attend the ceremony. At that time she received a ring, which she, like her fellow Sisters, wears on her ring finger. It is a symbol of her initiation into the order, and it attests to her acceptance of Christ as her Savior and master. It also represents her vows of Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience. Moreover, it symbolizes a relationship—her partnership with God—and her desire to share her love, not just with one specific man, but with humanity in general through a life devoted to service, prayer and proselytization.

There are several things that are significant about Gabriella's account of her decision to become a missionary nun. Embedded in her life story is a narrative convention that is not uncommon in the autobiographical writings of Western missionaries: the establishment, through a childhood episode, of spiritual coherence in the life of the individual. The childhood incident thus functions as a metaphorical seed that contains the germ of a symbolic narrative structure, that of an unfolding spiritual commitment.¹⁶ While I do not know if Gabriella had read any autobiographical books about the lives of missionary nuns, the fact that she read the SVD publication, *The Word*, is significant. The articles in this magazine, as well as those in other missionary publications that I have seen, are meant for general public consumption and typically have stories about the lives of missionary priests and nuns.¹⁷

What is perhaps surprising and unconventional about Gabriella's narrative is that the childhood incident she recounts is one that made her angry. Rather than the more typical childhood incident in missionary autobiographies that present a story of simple childhood faith and a retrospective realization of an early calling, Gabriella's narrative conveys that at an early age she felt a sense of disbelief at what she was being told as well as a sense of exclusion. The words she heard evoked anger in her because she felt that it was not possible for her, a Papua New Guinea girl, to become a missionary nun. It is important to note that at this time there were no indigenous SSps nuns in Papua New Guinea. The Servants of the Holy Spirit have only recently integrated indigenous women into their order. Formerly, if Papua New Guinea women aspired to become a nun, they were only allowed to become members of their own separate order, the Sisters of the Rosary. These sisters were

16 Moreover, it has been suggested that from the point of view of narrative, childhood incidents such as the one Gabriella recounts structurally function in missionary narratives to symbolically echo the words of Jesus that the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which although the smallest of all seeds, eventually grows into a tree so big that birds can build nests in its branches (Mikaelsson n.d., 1). In addition, gender seems to be a significant factor, with women being more than twice as likely as men to describe childhood reminiscences (n.d., 2).

17 In addition to *The Word*, there is *The Mustard Seed*.

sometimes called the "Pink Sisters" because of the color of their uniforms, which contrasted with the blue veils and blue or white dresses worn by the SSpS sisters. This racial segregation of the sisters seems to have been justified in terms of the difference in the educational backgrounds of the two groups. As the Sisters of the Rosary had less formal education than the SSpS sisters, they were given a different set of tasks to perform (cf. Huber 1999, 194).

Thus, Gabriella's story also becomes one of modernity and change. Her membership in the Servants of the Holy Spirit order and her status as the first indigenous SSpS nun from PNG to be given an overseas assignment mark a significant change in the structure and rules of the order. It marks a shift from the order as a predominantly European and exclusively white organization to a more multicultural and racially heterogeneous community of women.

However, as Mary Huber and I have pointed out (Huber 1999; Lutkehaus 1999), the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit are still subordinate to the SVD priests, consonant with the general sentiment and practice of the Roman Catholic Church itself. Why would a young educated Papua New Guinea woman with a variety of new career options open to her choose to become a nun?

The answer lies in part, I believe, in an image of Sister Gabriella we captured on video tape the day of the celebration in Tambunam. In this image she is seen wearing the typical white dress and blue veil that comprises the SSpS nuns' uniform. She is sitting outside a thatched roof house in Tambunam village watching a cooking pot simmer over an open fire surrounded by young children. In having decided to join the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit—symbolized in the video image by her blue veil and white dress—Gabriella had freed herself not only from life as a village woman and the roles of wife and mother—symbolized in the video by the cooking pot and children—but from these same two roles that also characterize the life of PNG women living in towns. Instead, she has chosen to join a community of women. But not just any group, rather, to use Burrige's term, a group characterized by its individuality—as indicated by the fact that all the members of the group are "*individuals*" italicized: that is, women who have all experienced some sort of personal transformation that has led them to profess a similar set of goals, values and faith.

Here is where Burrige's notion of Christian contrariness comes to the fore. For Gabriella, choosing to become a missionary nun was a quiet act of rebellion and contrariness. It afforded her an opportunity to reject the status quo for young women of her generation and background. And it allowed her to take advantage of an opportunity that she had not envisioned as possible when she was a child: to join the SSpS order as a moral and social equal with the European and other white women.¹⁸

18 Although I do not have the time or space to explore more examples of this "contrariness" in the life histories and metanoia of other SSpS sisters, in my conversations with young nuns from Viet Nam and Poland, they, too, explained that the political and social conditions they found themselves in during the 1970s and 1980s led them to see their choice of becoming a missionary nun as radical and as a rejection of the status quo. For them, they were choosing to become "New Women." These sisters' stories of conversion also resonate with the conversion stories I collected for an earlier generation of European sisters. See Lutkehaus (1995).

But these personal considerations are combined with a set of religious convictions which see a Christian, and, in Gabriella's case, a Catholic way of life, as leading to a more perfect, that is, morally more equitable and loving, world.

Thus, following the notion of the "New Man" that Burridge originally delineated in *Mambu and New Heaven, New Earth* (1969a) (which is also based on his analysis of millenarian beliefs and practices in Melanesia), I suggest that Sister Gabriella exemplifies the "New Woman." The "New Man" in Melanesia was predicated on an individual's rejection of the past and its sinful ways and the acceptance of new forms of behavior, beliefs, and values (Burridge 1960, 29). It involved a vision of moral rejuvenation through personal and social change—a vision that Burridge suggests is also characteristic of missionary motivations. Thus my choice of the term "New Woman" aims to highlight the term's gendered inflection while holding on to the moral and religious dimensions of the concept. Moreover, my use of "New Woman" also intends to resonate with the term's association with that phase in American and European women's history at the end of the nineteenth century and first two decades of the twentieth in which Euro-American women experimented with new roles for women and new concepts of femininity. For Gabriella, becoming a missionary nun afforded her a novel opportunity for freedom from the conventional roles available to indigenous women as well as an opportunity to join a new type of moral community.

However, it is also important to note that although Gabriella's choice to become a nun may have been contrary to her family's desire for her to marry and have a family, her choice did not end up alienating her from her own extended family. Indeed, even the relatively simple life of Catholic missionary nuns in Papua New Guinea represents a more modern and luxurious lifestyle, and thus elevation to a higher socioeconomic class, than that of rural villagers. Ultimately Gabriella's relatives were supportive of her decision to join the SSPS order, perhaps in part because they saw her affiliation with the Catholic Church as a potentially useful alliance for them as well as a personally satisfying choice for her.¹⁹

The Mission Sending Ceremony: *Community* and the "Marriage" of Sister Gabriella

The notion of community takes on two meanings with regard to a missionary. First, there is the commitment of a missionary to living within a mission community. In the case of Catholic missionaries, this means a sex-segregated community of other missionary nuns or priests and brothers, whose mutual goal is to work towards the creation of a new Christian community in the host country through proselytizing, conversion and baptism. Thus the new Christian community of believers represents the second form of community important to a missionary. In the case of Sister Gabriella, her Iatmul relatives chose to highlight the transfer of Gabriella from

19 See Deborah B. Gewertz and Frederick K. Errington (1999) for a more detailed discussion of the emergence of class in PNG. Their book, interestingly enough, focuses on Wewak, the urban center in the Sepik Province where Gabriella attended school.

her natal community of Tambunam and her network of kinsmen there to her new religious and moral community of SSps sisters with a special ceremony.

On Sunday, July 3, 1994 several hundred villagers along with the Catholic bishop from Wewak and assorted SVD priests and SSps nuns, including the Mother Superior from Alexishafen, gathered together near the Iatmul village of Tambunam to celebrate Sister Gabriella's impending departure for Africa. The ceremony witnessed that day was a synthesis of Catholic and Iatmul custom.²⁰ On the one hand, it was a mission-sending ceremony, the type of event the SVD priests and Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit have held for decades to honor a novice missionary and to celebrate the occasion of his or her departure to their first foreign endeavor. Thus, there was a procession in which the Catholic hierarchy—the bishop, followed by priests, brothers and sisters—gathered to celebrate mass and to recognize the immanent departure of one of their members.

In the present case, before introducing Sister Gabriella and talking about her impending departure, Father Nigel, the Bishop of Wewak, first introduced a local priest, Father Sekula, to the crowd. It was particularly apt that he did so as Father Sekula was from Ghana, the very country where Sister Gabriella was being sent. Introducing the Ghanaian priest highlighted the international make-up of the mission order, in particular, its multiracial character (a point which Father Nigel further elaborated upon by introducing the various priests and sisters present and identifying the countries from which they had come).²¹ Father Sekula's introduction also underscored the reciprocity of the current event: Papua New Guineans were sending an indigenous missionary to Ghana in exchange for the missionary the Ghanaians had sent to PNG. While this exchange was not formally commented upon, symbolically it indicated the establishment of a relationship of equality and reciprocity between PNG and Ghana, as well as a special connection between the two distant countries.

Sister Gabriella's explanation of the ceremony was that the missionaries wanted to explain to the Iatmul where she was going and what she would be doing. Thus, according to her, the priests and sisters were not only celebrating her departure, the point of a mission-sending ceremony, they were also using her departure as an opportunity to educate and proselytize. Since Gabriella was the first Catholic missionary from Papua New Guinea—male or female—to be sent to Africa, the mission was informing the villagers that a new era had dawned in the relationship of the missionaries to Papua New Guineans, and of Papua New Guinea to the world.

20 We recorded the ceremony in its entirety and I have produced a short 3 minute clip that highlights certain key moments in the event.

21 The Bishop also commented on Father Sekula's attire, pointing out that it was not like the clothing of the priests from Europe or America or even PNG. It was, he said, typical of the type of clothing men wear in Father Sekula's native country, Ghana. Although Father Sekula does not necessarily wear his Ghanaian clothes everyday, he did so on this occasion to highlight both difference and similarity. Difference lies in the fact that different people from different countries may wear different clothing. Similarity lies in the fact that all the priests there are members of the same organization, working as a unified whole for the good of the mission. It does not matter, so the SVD missionaries say, whether people wear similar clothing or different clothing, what matters is their shared beliefs in God and in Christianity.

Now Papua New Guineans themselves could aspire to go abroad and work as missionaries. And Papua New Guinea, as a nation, was now directly involved in a global exchange of missionary labor with distant nations such as Ghana.

In addition to being a Catholic missionary-sending ceremony, as Sister Gabriella pointed out, the ceremony also incorporated elements of a traditional Iatmul marriage ceremony. Although marriage is not marked with an elaborate ritual among the Iatmul, there is usually a formal recognition of a couple's decision to marry via a procession of the bride's male kin who accompany her to her new residence, often laden with her domestic possessions—cooking pots, clay fire hearth, clothing—and, in the case of preferred *iai* marriages, a gift of cash, a form of groomwealth paid to the groom's family by the bride's family (cf. Silverman 2001, 108).

In the case of Sister Gabriella, after the protocol performed by the priest, the locus of the ceremony shifted from the podium to the group of Iatmul men and women on the ground, relatives of Sister Gabriella from Tambunum village. At this point Gabriella was seated with them, wearing her white missionary dress, but also, significantly, adorned with a headdress of shell valuables—wealth called *nggwat keranda*, a phrase that in Tambunum refers to a bygone conciliation gesture whereby men smeared tree sap (*nggwat*) down the legs of their opponents (Silverman 2001, 100).²² Thus, we might interpret the actions of the Iatmul men and women who presented Sister Gabriella to the missionaries—first to Father Nigel, who after symbolically having pulled Gabriella away from her relatives via a long hook then handed her to the Mother Superior—as formally legitimizing the exchange of Gabriella from her paternal relatives to her new “affinal” relatives—the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, we might think of the elaborately decorated pole aflutter with *kina* bills that Gabriella's male relatives handed over to Father Nigel as a form of groomwealth that Gabriella's relatives were presenting to the mission.²³

Although Sister Gabriella did not associate the ceremony with the Iatmul practice of *naven*,²⁴ from the standpoint of an external observer, it could be considered as such since *naven* ceremonies are traditionally held to celebrate a major achievement, especially a first performance of some particular activity or a change in social status, such as marriage (Bateson 1958, 8). Analysis of this additional symbolic dimension must await another occasion. Still, as Bateson asked of the *naven* ceremony (1958, 86), we might ask of the missionary-sending cum marriage ceremony: what effect does the creation of a link between the Iatmul and the Catholic missionaries have upon the Iatmul, and, conversely, upon the SVD/SSpS society?

22 As Silverman points out, in the context of marriage, the reference to *nggwat* is a symbolic attempt at subduing affinal tension (see also Bateson 1958, 310; Silverman 2001, 100).

23 *Kina* notes are PNG's paper currency. A 1 *kina* note, which is what most of the bills were that adorned the pole, was worth about US\$1.50 in 1994.

24 And I did not talk with any of her relatives to ask them directly if they considered the ceremony an example of a *naven* performance, nor did I determine the kinship relationships of the individuals who accompanied Sister Gabriella.

From the standpoint of the people of Tambunum, and especially Sister Gabriella's relatives, the "marriage" of Gabriella with the SSps sisters creates a new alliance with a powerful set of affines. Although no formal bridewealth was paid by the Sisters to Gabriella's relatives, as would have been expected had Gabriella married a Iatmul man, nonetheless her clansmen probably did consider the alliance to be a favorable one for them, as it would strengthen their affiliation with a powerful group in the region—the Catholic Church as represented by the SVD order and the SSps sisters. From the standpoint of the missionaries, they, too, stood to benefit from the alliance and its public celebration, for Gabriella's incorporation into the order of the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit signals a new phase in the multicultural make-up of the order, a fact that the order wants to be more widely known and appreciated.

Adaptation and Secularization: The 1990 General Chapter, Catholic Feminism and Multiculturalism among the Holy Spirit Sisters

In this final section, I want, once again, to shift discussion to another level of analysis. I first discussed missionary nuns from the standpoint of the individual, analyzing Sister Gabriella and her motivation to become a missionary nun. I then considered the social level, Sister Gabriella in relationship to the two major groups of which she is a member—her Iatmul clan and village and her new "family" of SSps sisters. I now want to move from the local scene in Papua New Guinea to consider the SSps order as an international organization. As such, our focus now shifts to Rome, where the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit order have their world headquarters.

As Burridge points out, missions are continually involved in processes of accommodation to the cultures with which they interact and the larger social world in which they are embedded. He refers to adaptation, indigenization, and inculturation as different concepts that evoke the process, each in slightly different ways, by which missions are given different cultural but still recognizably Christian expression (1991, 182). Adaptation, envisaged as a two-way process of change, "is an old word now out of vogue," he says, while indigenization "often seems artificial and patronizing" (1991, 182). He thus feels that inculturation is the most appropriate term to use to refer to the continual restructuring of cultural expressions and ritual forms that Christianity undergoes in changing historical conditions. We can consider the mission-sending cum marriage ritual just discussed as an example of inculturation; an example, that is, of the SVD/SSps missionaries participation in the dynamic process of integrating indigenous missionaries into their Catholic missionary community.

Missions are quintessential transnational organizations, and none is more so than Catholic mission orders such as the SVD and SSps, with their relationship to the Holy Roman Church in Rome, itself historically playing a major role in processes of imperialism, colonization and globalization.²⁵ In order to adapt to global changes, since its inception the order of the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit

25 See Appendix A for a list of countries where SSps nuns work, the year in which the mission was founded, and the number of nuns currently working in these countries.

have held meetings, called General Chapters, in which members of the organization have discussed the challenges faced by their order as a result of social, political and economic changes in the larger world in which they participate, as well as a result of spiritual changes within the Catholic Church.²⁶

The 10th General Chapter of the Servants of the Holy Spirit order took place in Rome in 1990, four years prior to my research at the SSpS headquarters there. Aspects of the changing ideology and practices of the order, such as an increasingly feminist perspective and a greater sensitivity to the multiracial and multicultural identity of the sisters and the peoples among whom they live and work, is reflected in the publication, *Missionary Thrust of the Servants of the Holy Spirit in Today's World* (Rehbein 1990), a commentary on the issues discussed at the international meeting of the capitulars, or representatives, of the order. In this section, I want to mention several points made in this document and discuss what they imply in terms of the SSpS sisters as an organization increasingly made up of members from nonwestern countries, from the very countries that traditionally were the "barren grounds" upon which missionaries choose to sow the seed of Christianity.

The document's commentary states very clearly the importance of the order's international composition:

An international community of women of different origins, cultures and educational attainment [such as the SSpS], is because of this reality a prophetic sign of the universal unity of the Kingdom. Our international communities should be places in this world where differences are not mutually exclusive but complement each other harmoniously. As communities in the Church they are prophetic signs and the anticipation of the final community in the end of time to which God has called all of humanity (1990, 79).

Here we find evidence of the order's members' realization that the type of multicultural communities the sisters are creating in their convents and mission stations around the world represent models of (e.g., prophetic signs) the type of communities Catholic Christians will form in the future: racially and culturally mixed, with differences complementing one another and co-existing harmoniously. In this respect the document reflects the understanding of a once predominantly white European constituency of the need to accommodate itself to changing global realities through a new, more inclusive, notion of "sisterhood," and community.

It also expresses a rethinking of traditional religious and moral metaphors of family and God, as well as of the sisters' identity as women. In the document, the concept of the family serves as a key conceptual metaphor for the SSpS sisters and their missionary work. Not only is there frequent mention of God the Father and Jesus his son, there is also reference to the women who established the order in 1896 as their founding "Mothers." The SSpS order was originally founded by Mother Maria

26 For an interesting discussion of the internal conflict between the male patriarchal hierarchy of the Catholic Church and its response to changes within many of the Catholic sisters orders since Vatican II, see journalist Kenneth A. Brigg's book, *Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of American Nuns* (New York: Doubleday, 2006). Much of what he has to say about the Catholic Church's attitudes and actions towards American nuns is also relevant to other nuns as well.

(Helena Stollenwerk) and Mother Josepha (Hendrina Stenmanns), who requested of Father Arnold Janssen, the founder of the SVD order, that he allow them to establish a female missionary order. In the commentary of the 10th General Chapter of the SSsP, Rehbein writes that "It is certainly safe to say that the glorification of God was an essential element of the spirituality of our Mothers" (Rehbein 1990, 66). She then quotes Mother Maria from a letter she wrote February 2, 1896: "To God the glory, to our neighbor the benefit, and to ourselves the burden" (1990, 66). As such the family serves as a conventional way of conceptualizing one domain of experience (in this case, the Catholic Christian community the missionaries are working to create) in terms of another, one that allows the sisters to emphasize the female role of mother (cf. Lakoff 2002).²⁷ Thus, they state that

It is the woman who again and again brings new life into the world...To bring forth life is not something the woman does sporadically, but is an essential part of her being. The woman is always mother, even when she does not conceive physically, because it is part and parcel of her very essence to give life, to protect and to welcome it. It is her very nature to be in union with life and to be part of it (1990, 74).

Moreover, they realize that God is not simply a loving father, but also exhibits "characteristics of the mother, who consoles, does not forget the child of her womb, holds the child close to her cheek, and finally at the end of time will dry all the tears in our eyes. As women we are called to reveal in human history this feminine face of God" (1990, 77).

The emphasis in the commentary on the identity of the nuns as women and on the important contributions that only women, because of their essential female nature, can make towards the creation of a truly Christian community, are expressions of a Catholic feminism that has been increasing within Catholicism since at least Vatican II.²⁸ It is not surprising that the SSsP nuns, many of whom are highly educated, should have been influenced by the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and

27 In his book *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (2002), cognitive linguist George Lakoff points out how both political liberals and conservatives talk about the nation in terms of the family. The difference between the two political persuasions, he argues, has to do with their two fundamentally different notions of the family and parenting. I find his notion of a conceptual metaphor, in this case of the Nation-as-Family, to be useful in thinking about the ways in which the SSsP sisters unconsciously conceptualize their own organization as a family, in their case, as a family of women, a "sisterhood." Thus, I suggest, that they have a changing notion of both the actual constituency as well as the moral meaning of sisterhood.

28 See Paul Hofmann's discussion (2002, 187-188) for more details and a general discussion of various expressions of feminism by nuns as well as lay women. See also Kenneth A. Briggs (2006) for a discussion of the Catholic Church's reactions to these "feminist" ideas and actions. Briggs goes so far as to say that Catholic nuns have been "double crossed" by the male hierarchy of the Catholic Church, having been first given permission by Vatican II to make changes in their lives and organizations and then being punished for having done so (Briggs 2006, 7).

1970s in the United States and Europe, as well as by the mass of feminist scholarship produced first by Western and, more recently, by Third World women as well.²⁹

The SSps sisters have adapted feminist ideas to indirectly critique the patriarchal structure of the Catholic Church, while offering a solution: the importance to the Church of the particular form of feminine spirituality and feminine approach to mission work that they can offer. For example, Sister Rehbein writes:

Everywhere in the world there is a growing awareness of the dominant patriarchal structure and organization which ignores the feminine contribution. In spite of the increasing feminine consciousness in many countries and cultures, the influence of women is still felt mostly in the private realms of life. At the same time we live in an era where an appreciation for the dignity and equality of women is growing. This realization affects the deeper realms of our lives: our language, our images of God, our understanding of the Word of God and the manner of our relationships (1990, 75).

Speaking of a notion of a specifically feminine form of spirituality, she adds:

The evolution of a feminine spirituality questions more and more the masculine world-view so predominant today. In this view individualization is considered the highest human task; the feminine view, on the other hand, emphasizes relationships (1990, 77).

Here we see echoes of Carol Gilligan's work on female psychology, *In a Different Voice* (1982), reinterpreted in light of the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit's notions of feminine spirituality.

There is also recognition of the changing field where missionaries should work, with the realization that urban centers are the "outposts" of the future:

In the modern age, missionary activity has been carried out especially in isolated regions...hard to penetrate because of difficulties of communication, language or climate. Today...efforts should be concentrated on the big cities, where new customs and styles of living arise together with new forms of culture and communication...The future of the younger nations is being shaped in the cities.³⁰

For the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit, hand in hand with urbanization goes the impoverishment and exploitation of women:

Deprived of her basic rights, used as a sex-object, a trade-object and cheap labor in many parts of the world. Her state is often not too far removed from the state of a slave (Rehbein 1990, 37).

29 As the SSps order was originally a German order, the references that Sister Franziska Rehbein cites in the Commentary on the 10th General Chapter of the SSps are primarily from German sources. Moreover, many SVD and SSps missionaries are trained in anthropology as well as theology, with attention to ethnography having always been a hallmark of the order. See Lutkehaus (1983) and Huber (1988). Rehbein, for example, cites her own ethnographic research on an AfroBrazilian cult in her bibliography (Rehbein 1989).

30 Rehbein (1990, 47), quoting an encyclical of Pope Paul II on the missionary mandate of the church.

Finally, consumerism and materialism are recognized as enemies of both Christianity and the missionary vocation. According to the capitulars gathered together at the 10th General Chapter "power, achievement, recognition, consumerism and individualism are highly inflated in their inherent importance and value and increasingly influence individuals as well as societies" (Rehbein 1990, 17). Because many people consider individual material possessions to be their highest aspiration, and thus are led to an insatiable consumerism, they are cut off from the values of the gospel that inspire "detachment, simplicity and true community" (1990, 17).

Sister Annemarie Reich, the Superior General of the SS_pS order, noted that there are fewer sisters coming from Europe, Australia, and the United States today than in the past because of the increase in consumerism. In the recent past, for example, there were a lot of sisters coming from Poland. However, since the Polish economy changed as a result of the breakdown of communism in Poland, there has been a decline in the number of novices coming from there. Concomitantly, there had been an increase in the number of candidates from Czechoslovakia until economic changes evolved there as well. By far the largest numbers of new members are from India and Indonesia, countries that have increasingly well-educated middle and lower class populations, but that also, because of increased industrialization, have a scarcity of well-paying jobs for that educated population, especially for educated women.³¹ In such situations, becoming a missionary nun offers women new options for freedom from traditional female roles, new opportunities for travel, independence and adventure, and a new form of community that did not exist for them in the past.

Conclusion

Burridge made a pioneering contribution to our ethnographic understanding of missionaries as a metaculture as well as a major intervention into the sometimes knee-jerk reactions and stereotypes of missionaries promulgated by anthropologists. In particular, I have found his notion of Christian contrariness to be useful in understanding the distinguishing characteristics of Catholic missionary nuns in relationship to both the cultures from which they have come and to the patriarchal Catholic Church in which they are embedded.

What I hope to have added to Burridge's initial insights into an analysis of the missionary endeavor is a gendered—and racial—inflection. As Mary Huber and I have tried to show in our collection of essays about missionaries (1999), the gender dynamics of Christian missions have been essential to understanding the nature of missionary discourse and practice. While some of the reasons why men and women become missionaries may be the same, and the dynamic process of missionary conversion may be similar for men and women, female missionaries, at least many of today's SS_pS sisters, see themselves as having a particularly feminine role to play in the missionary endeavor, one that is neither superior or inferior to that of men's, but distinctively female.

31 Interview with Sister Annemarie Reich, Superior General, SS_pS, August 8, 1994, Rome.

Certainly, for the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit missionaries, as expressed in their 10th General Chapter meeting, there is a sense that as women they have a special calling, special gifts to offer, and special empathy for and commitment to help poor and exploited women and children worldwide.³²

For Sister Gabriella in particular becoming a missionary nun seems tantamount to becoming a new kind of modern Melanesian woman: a New Woman in the sense that she can transcend the traditional Papua New Guinea role for women of wife and mother (whether living in a rural village or urban *taun*), embark on an adventure to countries like Ghana that she never dreamed of visiting, participate in a vast, transnational organization, become a member of the emerging indigenous middle class in Papua New Guinea, and at the same time help to transform the world into a more just, equitable and morally better place. Although Gabriella did not specifically state these outcomes to be the reasons why she chose to become a missionary nun, nevertheless much of what she recounted, such as her family's initial resistance to her becoming a nun (and their subsequent acceptance of her decision), indicates that she was aware of them. Moreover, the effects of her becoming a missionary sister are similar to those that caused many of the very first European women, as well as subsequent generations, to become Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit themselves (Lutkehaus 1999).

There is one other important dimension to Sister Gabriella's decision to become an SSsP nun that speaks in particular to the issue of an anthropology of Melanesian morality. And that is the way in which becoming an indigenous missionary is a means of dealing with the former immorality Melanesians felt characterized the hierarchical relationship between whites and blacks in Melanesia. Thus, a significant moral, as well as social, dimension of Gabriella's decision to become a nun appears to be the fact that she has been able to become a part of a community of women—and men (the SVD priests and brothers who also make up the SSsP order's religious and social community)—that formerly excluded individuals of her racial background. If we recall her saying how angry she was as a schoolgirl when an Australian nun had told her that someday she too could become a missionary sister, we realize that another important aspect of her choice to become an SSsP nun seems to have been the fact that she would become an equal member of a social group that had formerly only been open to white women. For if indeed the means to attain equitable relations between whites and blacks has been one of the primary moral dilemmas for Melanesians, as Burridge stated when he analyzed the figure of the "New Man" as means for Melanesians to grapple with the complex moral issues that colonialism had foisted upon them, then Gabriella's ability to be "married" to the community of SSsP sisters represents a new form of racial equality between whites and blacks, and thus a moral achievement not only for Gabriella herself, but for Melanesians in general.

32 As Kenneth A. Brigg's points out, this focus on a common call to help the poor, that is, to furthering social justice, is one of two strategies that Catholic nuns have adopted in recent years. The other is a return to the more cloistered life of nuns of the past. The first strategy is favored by more progressive orders such as SSsPs, the second by more conservative groups (Briggs, 2006, 10).

PART IV
BEYOND MELANESIA

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 10

Homo Anthropologicus in Aboriginal Australia: “Secular Missionaries,” Christians and Morality in the Field¹

Robert Tonkinson

Introduction

My focus here is on two kinds of fieldworker, the anthropologist and the Christian missionary, their relationships with indigenous people, and issues of morality, politics and prejudice relating to their work. The activities of both typically involve a concerted reach into Otherness, but with contrasting motives, strategies, objectives and outcomes. One prominent scholar who has compared missionary and anthropological endeavors is Ken Burridge, whose writings have inspired this chapter. As both committed Christian and social anthropologist, he is well placed to evaluate these two varieties of “marginal man.” Though he sees important parallels between them, and speaks of the anthropologist as a kind of “secular missionary,” he is generally more approving of missionaries and accords them a moral position much stronger than that of the field anthropologist.

My first encounter with missionaries was in Australia, when as a young anthropologist I closely observed a struggle for hearts and minds between a small group of Christian fundamentalist missionaries and a much larger number of Western Desert Aborigines (Tonkinson 1974). This experience led me to draw very different conclusions from those of Burridge, hence this attempt to explain the disparity in our assessments of missionary endeavor and the role of the social scientist. I pay particular attention to elements of Christian fundamentalism that constrict the moral universe of missionaries in ways that inhibit an embrace of the exotic Other. Attitudes to, and interactions across, the ethnic divide are also integral to my explanation. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the significant changes occurring since the 1970s in the attitudes of Christian churches, Aboriginal perspectives, the roles of missionaries and anthropologists and the tenor of relationships between the two kinds of fieldworker.

1 For their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter, I thank Myrna Tonkinson, Victoria Burbank, Richard Davis, Martin Forsey, Katie Glaskin, Sandy Toussaint and David Trigger. I am particularly indebted to John Barker for his most valuable comments on two earlier drafts.

Burridge (1991) is one of many scholars who argue that the enormous diversity among Christian missionaries, even members of the same church or order, precludes them from being considered as a single missionary culture (see, for example, Beidelman 1982; Welbourn 1961). Beyond the call to go forth, “teach all nations,” and convert the heathen, many factors influence the strategies and structures of any particular missionary body, but central to all are sets of moral imperatives governing behaviors and anticipated outcomes in the field. During research for this chapter, however, I was unable to find much ethnographic data specifically linking church tenets and missionary worldview to moral attitudes toward the indigenous Other. Yet, as I see it, there is an inescapable connection among Christian fundamentalist understandings about the intrinsic nature of the exotic Other, their attitudes to conversion strategies, and observable realities in the field. What actually happens between missionaries and the Others they seek to convert is related to the ability of the mission-in-action to realize and sustain the transcultural missionary, and a “color-blind” flow of empathy, love, fellowship and unity across the cultural divide—major objectives of missionary work. I take this flow to be contingent rather than inevitable, and bound up with the presence or absence of moral boundaries. My concern here is with the complex nature of these interconnections, especially when they produce in missionaries attitudes and behaviors towards the Other that contrast markedly to the empathy and rapport that anthropologists consider imperative for fieldwork success.

Anthropologists (“Secular Missionaries”) and Christian Missionaries Compared

In a wide-ranging review of Aboriginal studies, Burridge (1973) provides the first detailed comparison of these two kinds of reach into Otherness in Australia, and mounts a spirited defense of missionaries along with a strong critique of anthropological fieldwork. He posits common origins for Christianity and anthropology and sees in both a major tension or opposition between what he terms “rational objectivity” and “participation in oneness.” As an essential feature of European ethos, this dialectic “has always informed the substance of anthropological thought and investigation” (1973, 232). Evoking parallels with the anthropologist’s movement into a different cultural ambience, Burridge notes that Christianity was always a missionary faith, and from the Renaissance on, “missionaries and clergy have prepared the mind for an appreciation of otherness” (1973, 15), just as anthropology necessitated an imaginative leap plus the skills to convert the raw materials of the participatory experience into something of intellectual and scientific relevance.

In contrasting missionaries and anthropologists, Burridge finds the position of the former ethically and morally more defensible, and is harshly critical of the field anthropologist’s role. Burridge depicts the anthropologist as an inherently ambiguous interloper, a kind of double-agent befriender who extracts information, deceives as to motives and purpose and serves two notoriously manipulatable masters: conscience and science (1973, 231). Regardless of outcomes, the missionary’s concern remains, at base, with people’s spirits and souls, whereas the anthropologist as a kind of

“secular missionary” must wrestle with the moral problem posed, for example, by having to choose among policy alternatives armed with only “the secular and highly specialized but usually spiritually impoverished intellectual background of today’s academic” (1973, 220). Burridge believes that, as anthropologists, we can never establish a truly moral relationship with those we study—a contention that most of us would surely want to debate, just as I seek to question here the universality of fundamentalists’ morality in the face of radical Otherness and the ethical distortions generated by a surfeit of “blind” faith burying cross-cultural understanding. As Burridge himself stresses, though, missionaries and anthropologists, and their conceptions of the Other, are products of their own culture, and their disciplines and belief systems may either reinforce or challenge views about racism, inequality, social justice and so on (cf. Harris 1990, 29).

In a later major work on missionaries, Burridge (1991, 218), noting the close cooperation that used to obtain between missionaries and anthropologists in the nineteenth century, suggests that anthropology can be fairly regarded “as first the secularization and then the secularist differentiation of what had once been a traditional missionary task”. For him, the endeavors of the anthropologist are imbued with “missionary purpose” (1973, 18). Part social reformer, part searcher for a more satisfying way of life, the anthropologist “seeks to appropriate both for himself, his culture and posterity the whole of a strange social order” and “tends to justify his intrusion into the affairs of others by referring either to what are in fact missionary ideals—albeit phrasing these ideals in a secular idiom—and/or to the impersonal appetite of science” (1973, 18). For the anthropologist, the rationally objective ideal of non-interference has always existed in tension with participatory realities demanding empathy and solidarity with one’s people, a dilemma that Burridge suggests “has usually been contingently and implicitly resolved at the level of a naive or uncertain political stance generally favouring the status quo” (1973, 24). In his view, it was for the most part Christian missionaries who voiced “the political implications of the moral relationship inherent in being there and asking questions” (1973, 35). Engagement with the Other in the field must inevitably change both parties in some way, hence “the requirement not simply of any intellectual framework expressing the dialectic between rational objectivity and the participatory values, but of one that envisages the ultimate synthesis or third set of terms, that can accommodate expanding awarenesses on both hands” (1973, 41).²

Burridge contrasts the dominant concerns of missionaries as hands-on practitioners of social change with anthropologists, who as social scientists deal with

(the logic of) uniformities, consistencies, and abstract relations...the task of an anthropologist is to reveal structures of order....The mystery of people and the intricate complexities of their lives are subservient to, simply the data for, the main thrust of

2 In his later work (Burridge 1991), this necessary change is embodied in his idea of “mutual metanoia,” a state in which both missionary and convert experience transformation “through mutual exchanges of perceptions of truth.” For him, “a metanoia...entails the negation of the past and present, a ‘no’ to the sinful ways of the past and present, a change of heart and mind, and, thus transformed, an entry into new ways and new moral discriminations with a positive affirmation” (1978, 19-20).

producing elegantly articulated structures – whether of mind or institutions – by means of analytical or expository artifacts (1991, 216).

This depiction strikes me as rather narrow and severe, the anthropologist as being all about “scientific” ends, unmoved by the messy multitude of daily interactions with the Other that constitute the essential instrumental means. While it is likely that the ultimate aim of most anthropologists would be a rationally objective portrait or “ethnography” of the Other whom they study, their key methodology is “participant observation,” the essence of which demands sustained empathetic engagement with participatory values. The anthropologist’s goal is understanding rather than transformation of the Other; the missionary likewise may wish to understand but is intent on changing people’s beliefs and behaviors.

According to Burridge, missionaries, on the other hand, ignore the “determinative” features of society, preoccupied as they are with “the vexed and muddled contrariness of people experiencing problems in their lives.” They actively maintain an ethical and moral critique as they labor to develop “a Christian *communitas* capable of overcoming the divisiveness of structures” and strive to bring institutions into line with changing forms (1991, 216). One wonders, though, how their role as judgmental social critics, and agents of the kinds of changes that are sometimes undesired and actively opposed by the Other, places them on higher ethical and moral ground than the seemingly uncaring and dispassionate anthropologist whose relativistic stance restrains if not precludes either judgmentalism or social engineering in the “client” community.³

However, Burridge discerns a parallel with anthropology as a science of the structures of systems of relations exhibited by people. He claims that, in accepting the reality of the structures they discern, “anthropologists are confident that the structures that divide peoples will, in the realization of common humanity, be bridged, overcome, or transcended,” which is “precisely what missionaries attempt to do and where their endeavors start” (1991, 217-218). Yet this does not seem to jibe with his statement very shortly thereafter that most anthropologists “remain fixedly hostile to the changes and transformations that missionaries primarily seek” (1991, 219). Also, though the bridging of these divisions may be a hope of some anthropologists, I doubt that most anthropologists would share the missionaries’ confidence, given what we know about the realities of social process and the sociology of conflict.

Returning to the Australian case, many scholars have contrasted Christianity’s spectacular successes in Oceania with the notably stony ground of Aboriginal Australia, where the going was slow and tough (see Tonkinson 2004b); in fact, all the early missions in eastern Australia ended in failure (Woolmington 1988). There is no simple explanation for Aboriginal imperviousness to the evangelizing efforts of missionaries from a variety of denominations. There is no doubt that Aborigines were

3 From her fieldwork in the Kimberleys, Sandy Toussaint (pers. com.) notes a tendency for presiding clerics at the now-frequent occasion of an Aboriginal funeral to engage in proselytising rhetoric. (Myrna Tonkinson and I have remarked on similar situations at Jigalong.) Toussaint offers the interesting suggestion that such events provide them with a captive audience, and an opportunity to create and exploit a “moral and physical space” undesired by, and unavailable to, the field anthropologist.

faced with a huge challenge: to cope with the dramatic change from a nomadic mode of adaptation to a settled existence under European institutional control. Burrridge (1973, 207) points out that it was also a hard struggle for the missionaries, without whose presence and protective efforts many more Aboriginal people would have succumbed to frontier disease and violence and disappeared. They were the only ones “who have actually applied themselves to the practical problems of embracing the Aborigines as brothers” (1973, 206), and “who not only tried to alleviate the conditions of Aborigines, but attempted to prepare them for a future that has just about arrived” (Burrridge 1988, 24). For all this, though, the indigenes did not convert in droves, which itself raises further questions (see Tonkinson 2004a).

In his critique, Burrridge claims that anthropologists operated from the ease and safety of an intellectual and disengaged perspective, and often adopted the high moral ground in their loud criticism of missionaries. By omitting the latter’s viewpoint in their studies of the contact situation, the anthropologists’ assessments were one-sided and redolent of “moral indignation and political bias” (1973, 208) and their seemingly indecisive political stance by default favored the status quo. Burrridge also notes that a major rationale for both sociology and anthropology has long lain “precisely in its applicability to political concerns,” yet the roles of “scientist” and “social reformer” do not sit well together, leading anthropologists to avoid spelling out the implications of their political involvement in their writings (1973, 214). He suggests that anthropologists, although able to identify various emerging social problems in Aboriginal communities, typically write for their colleagues rather than for those toiling on the front line and struggling to find practical ways of implementing change.

A Negative Contrast: Jigalong in the Mission Era

Such was the rather grim picture penned by Burrridge three decades ago, though he did note the advent of professional codes of ethics as guides for the fieldworker, and remarked on the increasing power of communities to place conditions on intending fieldworkers or else simply refuse to be studied (1973, 231). In 1972, he spent a year doing research among missionaries in Australia and Oceania (see Burrridge 1978, 7–8), which led eventually to *In the Way: A Study of Christian Missionary Endeavours* (1991). This major study of missionaries focused on “the problems, processes, and patterns that emerge from the primary work of bringing Christ to others” in an attempt to reveal “an interior logic to missionary activities” (1991, 234, x).

Burrridge’s positive valuations of missionary efforts appear to derive broadly from a mixture of personal convictions and understandings and insights gained from his reading on the evolution of religion and science in the West. In *Encountering Aborigines*, he also drew substantially from his familiarity with Roman Catholic missions in the Kimberley region of Western Australia (Burrridge 1988, 18).⁴ His

4 For a differing and more negative view of Roman Catholic missions in the Kimberleys, see Alroe (1988). McDonald (2001) provides a more recent account of interaction among Catholics and other Christians in the eastern Kimberley region. Glaskin (2002), who worked in the north-west of the Kimberleys, notes the importance of differences among missionaries

favorable account of missionaries contrasts strongly with my impressions of those who staffed the Aboriginal mission where I began fieldwork in 1963. This provides the ethnographic setting for the comparison below, which is preceded by a brief historical introduction to my field site.

Jigalong lies just beyond the western edge of the huge desert area to the south of the Kimberley region. It was founded in 1907 as a maintenance depot on the Rabbit Proof Fence, a massive but ultimately futile attempt to prevent these introduced pests from infesting the entire continent. Later a breeding station for camels, until motor vehicles replaced them in the 1930s, this remote outpost had also become a ration depot for local Aborigines, as well as gradually attracting small groups from the vast Western Desert region to the east. For most of these people, however, first contacts were with European pastoralists running small operations on the margins of the desert proper, so their understandings about Europeans were derived from rough and ready frontiersmen who were a far cry from what they would encounter following the State Government's closure of the depot, when a Christian mission was established at Jigalong.

The missionaries were members of a small Protestant Pentecostal fundamentalist sect that had been established in Britain in 1922 as "a direct move of God and a result of the preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of God as taught by the Holy Spirit."⁵ The Australian branch of the Church had been looking for a mission site for some years and was eager to "save" Aborigines from the Devil (hence the name they chose: "Aboriginal Rescue Mission"). In 1946, it began to minister to about a hundred needy Aboriginal people camped around the old Jigalong depot. Other than taking bible classes and the possession by some of vocational skills, its dozen or so male and female missionaries were not trained for the field and knew virtually nothing about Aboriginal society and culture when they accepted the call to serve; and most were not well educated, either. In this case, contra Burridge (1991, 222), the Church appeared not to have ensured that its recruits had the necessary tolerance and adaptability to work in strange surroundings and become transcultural.

The missionaries established dormitories for the school-age children and tried to restrict contacts between the children and the adults—whose camp was separated from the mission buildings by a large creekbed—in order to maximize their chances of converting the children to Christianity and alienating them from the indigenous culture, which they regarded as the work of the Devil. For much of the nearly quarter-century life of the mission, tensions often ran high between the missionaries and the Aborigines, who eventually came to identify themselves as Mardu (meaning

of the same church, and contrasts elements of the fundamentalist United Aborigines Mission at Sunday Island (whose administration in the 1940s equated learning the local language with fostering heathenism) with the Pallottine mission at Lombadina, home to the noted missionary-linguist Father Worms, who "is remembered by Lombadina people today as someone sympathetic to their culture, who said that there was very little difference between Aboriginal law and Christian beliefs, [since both] contained the same injunctions regarding the sanctity of human life, respect for one's parents, and so on" (Glaskin 2002, 132).

5 The Apostolic Church—Australia. Leaflet No. 2. Richmond: The Apostolic Church. Undated.

“person” or “one of us”), and only one local conversion was achieved.⁶ The situation as I described it sociologically was one of “unstable accommodation,” marked by chronic tensions and a paucity of informal interaction across the cultural divide, but an underlying mutual dependency: each party’s survival required the presence of the other, but the two were fundamentally at odds, rejecting each other’s religion, morality and worldview (1974; Tonkinson 1966).

Why the Contrasting Portraits?

My characterization of the attitudes and behaviors of the fundamentalist Christians at Jigalong (published in *The Jigalong Mob*, a case study written in 1974 on the theme of culture contact and indigenous coping strategies) stands in stark contrast to missionary endeavors as portrayed by Burridge. How to account for this? First, in discussing missionaries, he writes for the most part at a level of generalization well above that of the ethnographic. He conceptualizes Christian missionaries “as a general but distinctive class sharing certain attributes and motives” (1991, ix) and repeatedly emphasizes diversity, distinctiveness and variety in their work and purposes, existing within “common structures of problem and process” (1991, 236). He is committed to a “positive history of Christianity” (1991, 204), based ultimately in theology rather than empirical study of the social dynamics of the mission-in-action, which is where the field anthropologist resides, ever mindful of the gap between tenet and behavior. Secondly, and central to his developed conception of missionary impact, especially throughout *In the Way* (1991, esp. 54-59), is “generalized individuality,” a mode of moral being that is communicated more easily, and with unpredictable consequences, than his preferred outcome of mutual outreach and transformation.

From simple Bible-thumper or prayer-monger through culture-wrecker or social worker to holy innocent or spiritual exemplar, the many diverse perceptions of them arise from the fact that they are *individuals*, men and women of parts who try to awaken in others a sense of themselves and their best interests in morality before God (1991, 32).

Thirdly, although Burridge makes many references to denominations, these are mostly pitched at a high level of generality, and it seems that his Hegelian streak clearly favors the dialectical over the merely comparative-contrastive. He is particularly drawn to the complex and often subtle dialectical interplay of two key contrasting but complementary elements of “the Christian systemic” (see figure 1, 1991, 63): the “Devotional” (emphasizing prayer, contemplation, withdrawal, asceticism, sacrifice, devotion to the Godhead, etc.) and the “Affirmative” (active engagement with the sociocultural world), which “makes for doubts, skepticism,

6 Burridge (1988, 24) notes, however, that missionary “success” or “failure” cannot be measured quantitatively in terms of the number or rate of conversions to a faith, but rather by “the manner in which they attempt an imitation of Christ” in reconciling people and cultures to each other. Elsewhere (1991, 240), he says that “Being a missionary is self-justifying, requires no defense or apology in relation to conversions or otherwise, and is measured only by dedication, a sense of the predicaments of others, patience, and making oneself available.”

choices, and moral dilemmas that give rise to a variety of dialectics” (1991, 61). Fourthly, he stresses that every missionary has the task of bringing these elements “into appropriate and concrete relations in a field that becomes peculiar to him—or herself” (1991, 199), so he is again stressing the importance of individual missionary agency, grappling with everyday problems and the moral and political immediacies in which the Christian field worker is enmeshed. Burridge’s pursuit of this dialectic is without question heuristically productive, because it enables him to enrich and vivify his portrait of missionary ambition (which is, after all, a primary objective in this book). Yet it does not enlighten us as to which “contingencies” may cause the failure of “outreach,” “empathy” and “love” to vault the cultural divide, thus leaving some missionary endeavors looking decidedly tainted, as faulty transcultural fusions of fellowship and unity under God.

Given the above emphases in Burridge’s approach to missionaries, and its foregrounding of variability, individuality and personality, it is perhaps unsurprising that he shows little interest in making either denominational differences or fundamentalism a focus for sustained enquiry aimed at teasing out the possible significance of these variables for on-the-ground conjunctive relations between missionaries and indigenous peoples.⁷ In seeking answers to the contrast between Burridge’s portrait of missionaries and my own, I consider that how a given denomination interprets Christian doctrine and frames its objectives are conspicuous variables. My concerns, then, are with how these factors influence where moral boundaries are drawn, how flexible these are, and how they shape and color the behavioral consequences of missionaries’ answers to the big questions posed by Burridge (see below) about their understanding of the nature of the indigenous people among whom they are working. In what follows, I use my data from Jigalong to test some of his generalizations, especially those pertaining to missionary endeavor that touch on issues of ethics, morality, politics and the status and role of indigenous culture as facilitating or impeding change.

Christianity and the Missionary as Change Agent

In an overview article written for a volume on Australian Aborigines and Christianity, Burridge (1988, 19-20) speaks generally of the nature of Christianity, but more specifically from the viewpoint of a practicing anthropologist. From this perspective, he sees it as transcultural, exhibiting a wide diversity of cultural expression and theological bases that, in theory, “poses difficulties only where the faith is contradicted, obscured, or endangered” (1988, 20). It is also a metaculture, in which teachings and dogmas about experiences of Christ or His meaning serve as conduits to the actual experience, and the beliefs comprising the faith waver over time between poles of conviction and skepticism. However, because this metaculture seeks cultural expression in order to establish its relevance, it rejects part of a given

⁷ The few references to fundamentalism in *In the Way* (1991) tend to downplay difference; for example, when Burridge makes the point that fundamentalists can be flexible and liberal on some issues just as Catholics and other mainstream religions can be conservative and rigid.

culture and changes other elements. As Burridge sees this process, “‘Putting on the new man,’ which refers to the cultural implications of a metanoia or enlightenment and is hoped for in the case of simple conversions, implies and necessitates changes at both personal and collective levels” (1988, 20).

Burridge makes it very clear that Christianity, no matter how enlightened cross-culturally or mindful of its impact as an agent of inevitable cultural discontinuities and change, is by its very nature both transformational and threatening to the integrity of the cultural system on which it is impinging. What he rightly identifies as “antithetical” takes us to what for most social scientists is the ethical and moral crux of missionary impacts.⁸ Field anthropologists, particularly, should know better than anybody what our conceptualization of culture as “integrated” implies: that it is impossible to effect a neat and seamless “lobotomy” aimed at extracting the elements of an indigenous culture considered inappropriate and incongruent (or just plain sinful and abhorrent) and replacing it with novel institutions and practices, such as those of a new religion, leaving everything else intact. Knowing the impossibility of the task and the level of disruption accompanying such impacts, most social scientists would judge the attempt as morally and ethically inadmissible, regardless of whatever other “good works,” such as pacification, health care and education, are part of the missionary impact package (Burridge 1988, 24).

Ethnocide, or “culture-wrecking” is bound to continue, in the opinion of Burridge (1988, 25), “so long as missionaries (like anthropologists) regard Christianity as a culture derived from the European environment instead of, as they should, treating it as a faith or metaculture.” To the anthropological observer, at least, missionaries as morally engaged agents of change would also have to embrace hybridity, syncretism, indigenization and whatever other processes melded the contacting cultures into increasingly more congruent unities. Yet one would reasonably expect this kind of accommodation and tolerance to be anathema to those of fundamentalist persuasion who are not gradualists but seek the sudden and cataclysmic overturning of the indigenous social order as it is replaced by God’s kingdom, pure and unadulterated by the pollutants of paganism.⁹ It is this kind of fundamentalist scenario, and the missionaries who enact it, that demand a closer scrutiny than Burridge has perhaps accorded them when talking about morality and political action in the field.

8 Anthropologists’ negativity towards missionaries, of whatever persuasion, lies most certainly in this element of inevitable major cultural disturbance as identified by Burridge, and not in any functionalist nostalgia for retention of a culture’s “organic unity” or “equilibrium” on the part of anthropologists, as suggested, for example, by Stipe (1980), whose general account of tensions between missionaries and anthropologists seems largely to ignore the key difference between the multitude of changes, most of them unintended, flowing from Westernization and the intentional, directed change that is intrinsic to the missionary’s role.

9 See Trigger (1992, 67-69) for examples of this kind of thinking among fundamentalist Christian staff on an Aboriginal mission. Cf. Beidelman (1982, 17), who cites the early anthropologist Westermann’s comment on missionary experience teaching that “any form of syncretism is the death of genuine Christian life.” However, Beidelman himself rates variables such as missionaries’ length of residence and linguistic commitment, as well as “ethnicity, class and economic background” (1982, 9) as more relevant to outcomes than their degree of fundamentalism.

Beginning late in the nineteenth century, the growth of pointed critiques by concerned anthropologists of the negative impacts of “religious reforms” carried out by missionaries was prompted, as BurrIDGE (1991, 212) notes, by their perception that “the authenticities, color, and textures of social life” were being destroyed. BurrIDGE adds:

Missionaries were hardly sympathetic. Their business was very precisely the transformation or reform of symbolic structures or religion in order to create new authenticities within a matrix of sociocultural changes that were in any case inevitable as colonial ambitions and commercial developments overtook them (1991, 212).

The picture of anthropologists that BurrIDGE goes on to paint in this chapter, “Missiology and Anthropology” (1991, 199-232), contains much grist for the mill of the defensive anthropologist. He or she would no doubt protest that decades ago we gave up whatever nostalgia we may have harbored for the preservation of “the pristine primitive,” for the desire to insulate small-scale societies against European influences or for the urge to regard religion as “epiphenomenal and not part of scientific reality” (1991, 220) or to label the outcomes of Westernization as “inauthentic,” or to express a conviction that missionaries are the only hell-bent (or heaven-sent) agents of change on the fieldwork scene. Some of BurrIDGE’s characterizations here seem just as stereotypic as the long list of missionary stereotypes he presents in his Introduction (1991, 25-34).

The Nature of the Indigenous Other, and Its Implications for Moral Boundaries

Explaining the radical distancing of missionaries from local people leads BurrIDGE to furnish, then discuss, a list of questions (1973, 21-38) that early missionaries probably posed to themselves: (a) Were the indigenous peoples human? (b) if so, how to explain their origins and current condition; and (c) how to treat them and what should be done with them? Apart from the fact that the humanity of such peoples is now almost universally accepted, these questions remain relevant today. The way they are answered in any given mission situation will, I contend, provide major clues as to how closely conjunctive relations between indigenous Others and missionaries support or contradict BurrIDGE’s positive assertions about missionary activity, especially in terms of its ideals of outreach and the reconciling of intercultural differences.

As BurrIDGE says, apropos the first question, generally the more exotic the indigenes appeared, the less likely they would be assessed as fully human. For example, while not a denial of Aboriginal humanity, the comment to me by a Jigalong missionary in 1963 that the Aborigines there were unable to produce the wonderful craft items made by desert people at Ernabella Mission because their brains were smaller suggested that some of the staff harbored strong doubts. Though their Church had nothing to say in its information leaflets on the humanity of Aborigines, my understanding from the church magazine articles was that the missionaries regarded them as the Devil’s progeny, in dire need of rescue. My understanding was that the baptism of the Holy

Spirit is the essential transformative event, achievable principally through the power of prayer. Only by this sudden spiritual engulfment could the Aborigines be brought to God as transformed and “saved.”

In terms of operational strategies, though, the segregation of the school-aged children in dormitories was the missionaries’ practical strategy aimed at preparing for the enabling Holy Spirit, and perhaps an admission that the adults, especially the males, were so “lost in the great darkness” as to have been beyond rescue. The gender-separated dormitories were located within the White spatial domain and locus of their power, the *maya* (“mission”; literally, “house”), so as to both maximize surveillance, particularly of teenage girls, and minimize contaminating contact with the adults (“steeped in the Devil’s work”) and their spatial domain, the *ngurra* (“camp”), the locus of what one missionary described as a place of “vice, sin and filth.”¹⁰ Domain boundaries were strongly drawn in respect of informal social contacts: missionary visits to the camp, apart from periodic church services held there, were as rare as Aboriginal adults informally socializing inside missionaries’ houses. However, relationships between missionary women and the women who worked as their domestics were typically closer and less formal than those between the two groups of men.

The second question, concerning origins and these peoples’ current condition, could be easily answered via biblically-inspired degradation theories centering on a fall from grace. Although this issue did not appear to be a preoccupation of the missionaries at Jigalong, it should be noted that “The utter depravity of human nature, the necessity for Repentance and Regeneration, and the Eternal Doom of the finally impenitent” is one of the eleven immutable tenets of the missionaries’ Church, second only to “The Unity of the Godhead and the Trinity of the persons therein.” Between what missionaries said to me and what they wrote in their Church magazine, there is ample indication that they saw their main objective as rescuing the poor benighted Aborigines from their depraved state.

The third question, how to treat indigenous peoples and what to do with them, raises serious moral issues surrounding both the pragmatics of cross-cultural interaction and the nature and objectives of policy towards the Other in a situation that typically entails a significant power imbalance. Replete with value judgments and, no doubt, biblical interpretations, it involves an arena of attitude and action whose parameters are set as much by religious conviction as anything else. Although not a listed tenet of this church, missionary activity is prominent in its stated objectives: The Church “really does not possess a missionary movement; She *is* a missionary movement.”¹¹ By the 1960s, the small Australian branch was running missions in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and Papua New Guinea. Its information leaflet on

10 Trigger (1992) offers a detailed account of the significance of these domains at a fundamentalist Christian mission in Queensland. His important case study, plus that of McDonald (2001) on Christians at Hall’s Creek in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, along with my 1974 monograph, span almost three decades in their detailed accounts of fundamentalist Christian manifestations in “colonial” Aboriginal Australia.

11 Missionary Activity “Go Ye.” Leaflet No. 15. Richmond: The Apostolic Church. Undated.

missionary activity contains nothing about policy or principle in its cross-cultural dealings, but is illuminating in its talk of Church activities and successes; for example, in New Guinea:

Stone Age folk, recent cannibals, have been really converted, thieves transformed—men with blood on their hands—and now they are changed, converted by the power of the Gospel. Literally hundreds have been baptised in water, and similar crowds filled with the Holy Spirit, as in the Bible, speaking in other tongues as the Holy Spirit gives them utterance (nd:3; see FN11).

These attestations of God's power at work are particularly relevant to this chapter because, with the Holy Spirit as the fundamentalists' prime mover, what possible significance can be attached to the intercultural divide when its relevance is surrendered to ideas of universal Christian morality and redemption triumphing over morally corrupt indigenous societies. However, we gain little idea from the Church's information leaflets about how it envisages its responsibilities towards those it intends to rescue for Christ. The reasoning of the Jigalong missionaries, as I understood it, went thus: since the Aborigines are children of the Devil and therefore full of sin, they are not subject to "normal" moral and ethical injunctions. For example, in an appeal to the home congregations in the Church's magazine (Denton 1963, 33), one of the missionaries requested that special prayers be said for their own children because of "the peculiar dangers and temptations arising from association with the native children," whose alleged sexual precociousness weighed very heavily on missionary minds, as did strongly held convictions about adult depravity and men's brutal treatment of women.

Before I entered the field for the first time, a Native Welfare Officer with experience of the Jigalong Mission warned me never to appeal to any universal norms of social justice or human rights if I was moved to complain to the missionaries about their treatment of the Aborigines, because such appeals would fall on deaf ears. His advice proved correct, as my subsequent objections to cruel and unusual punishment meted out to children were invariably met with eyes averted skywards and quotes from the Bible. I thus had cause to recall that piece of advice and later realized why it was accurate: the fundamentalist theology of these missionaries heightened their sense of moral obligation and provided ample justification for any abuses of people they regarded as possessed by the Devil. The missionaries also shared popular racist views about the physical, moral, and spiritual inferiority of the people they sought to 'rescue'.

When the mission closed in 1969, following a widely publicized scandal over the severe beating of a seven-year-old girl, the church mounted a vigorous defense, claiming to have done nothing legally or even morally wrong; but its case was severely compromised by the fact that the scars on the girl's thighs were still clearly visible several months after the beating. My presumption is that, should it have been necessary to do so, the perpetrators could easily rationalize such treatment as an assault made on the Devil in an attempt to drive it out of the child's body—a kind of exorcism, in the end justifiable as a positive act carried out for the child's own ultimate salvation.

Embracing Otherness?

In *Encountering Aborigines*, Burrridge speaks early on about the ceaseless work of Christian missionaries in preparing the European mind for an appreciation and eventual embrace of Otherness (1973, 17). While such an accommodation would accord strongly with Christian notions of fellowship, what I have witnessed and read of fundamentalist missionaries in action leads me to question its universality. At Jigalong it was absent, presumably because the missionaries equated Aboriginal culture with the work of the Devil, as evil incarnate, which would seem to rule out a cross-cultural rapprochement based on some kind of moral equality. Viewed from their fundamentalist perspective, the size of the cultural gulf does not really matter because it is a chasm created by the powers of possession held by the Devil, construed as unbridgeable unless and until the Holy Spirit, responding to their entreaties and the power of the Gospels, does its apocalyptic transformative work. This chasm allowed the missionaries at Jigalong to have few if any moral qualms about their treatment of the Aborigines. Racism was another factor inimical to the embrace of Otherness. Convictions about the innate inferiority of the Aborigines were evinced in their comments about smaller brains, "childlike" behaviors, sexual depravity, untrustworthiness, unreliability, an inherent inability to learn and adapt, and so on.

To understand the tenor and content of cross-cultural interaction between missionaries and Others, it seems essential for the anthropological fieldworker to focus on a given church's conceptions of the cosmic order and its positioning of those Others within it.¹² How its missionary adherents answer Burrridge's questions on the nature of the Other should provide major clues. More specifically, the issue of conjunctive relations centers on whether or not missionaries situate their indigenous charges inside or outside their own moral universe, which I presume is in large part framed, if not actually constructed, from biblical sources and Church tenets and dogma, supplemented in the case of Pentecostals at least by "God's gifts", such as prophecy, revelation, glossolalia, miraculous healing, and interpretation.

"Rational objectivity" seemed absent from the worldview of the Jigalong missionaries, for whom Church tenets and religious dogma were a shield against the intrusion of "scientific" knowledge, universalist moral precepts, and so on. Far from the kind of European (including missionary) interest in the Other that led to attempts "to describe, identify and name the activities they saw taking place around them" (1973, 25), and far from the anthropologist's conscious efforts to "contain the participatory values within a rationally objective framework" (1973, 39), the narrowly drawn moral universe of these missionaries precluded such engagement or synthesis. This refusal extended even to attempting to learn the local vernacular, which, aside from the indelible metamessage of respect and commitment conveyed in this gesture, would at the very least have facilitated the communication of their version of the Christian message to the Aborigines. Admittedly, when I challenged

12 In my use of the term "cosmic order," I follow Lawrence (1964); see also Lawrence and Meggitt (1965, 7-9). See Tonkinson (1991) for an account of Mardu cosmic order and religious life.

him on this matter, the superintendent would give lip service to the importance of learning the language, and say there was simply not enough time available to undertake this task.

In the mission situation, I was positioned as the spiritually impoverished atheist, an unwelcome element whose presence nonetheless had to be tolerated because of the support of the state Native Welfare Department, under whose goodwill and financial support the mission operated. My intensive concentration on eliciting information about Aboriginal culture lent it a positive valuation, and was thus subversive of missionary endeavor committed to the condemnation and destruction of that culture as a necessary precursor to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Under these circumstances, it would have been very difficult for me to penetrate and modify the decidedly racist stereotypes the missionaries held of the Aborigines, or induce them to rethink and perhaps modify either their ideas or behavior.¹³

In retrospect, it is true that I had consulted only with the Aborigines as to what kinds of things I could or could not publish about them, and that I felt no moral or ethical qualms about my negative characterization of mission policy and practice in the 1974 case study. This was in line with my political stance against mission interventions aimed at weakening Aboriginal culture and strongly supportive of Aboriginal retention of their "traditional" beliefs and practices. Here, Burridge's notion of the anthropologist as a kind of secular missionary rings absolutely true, as I plead guilty to shamelessly preaching to the initiated men about the need to uphold their "Law" and to beware the distractive and debilitating evils of cards and grog respectively. This novice anthropologist was the classical change-conservative-but-political-liberal that George Foster (1973) talked about decades ago, somewhat unreflective of my own position but righteously critical of the interventionist tendencies of the missionaries bent on destroying Aboriginal culture in order to save its carriers.¹⁴

13 A willful ignorance of Aboriginal society and culture on the part of these missionaries was accompanied by a similar ignorance of what went on in camp. Within a couple of weeks of commencing fieldwork I found myself being questioned repeatedly by missionaries about the nature of life there, and many comments volunteered to me displayed an abundance of negative stereotypes, fed by often-lurid accounts of alleged goings-on in the camp gleaned from questioning Aboriginal women who worked as domestics in the houses of the missionaries, and as yet unmodified by direct observation. This is why I find it impossible to accept Burridge's (1991, 223) attestation that: "Few missionaries do not know more about the lives and problems of the individuals with whom they live than most anthropologists can ever know." In socially, spatially and "racially" segregated communities such as Jigalong at the time, the only non-Aboriginal person with a reasonably accurate and detailed knowledge of lives and problems of the indigenous segment of the population would have been the anthropologist.

14 As an aside on what the Mardu made of all this, I should mention that I was quickly characterized as a "whitefella," meaning not a "Christian," because I had tobacco and I swore (their earliest contacts having been with rough, blaspheming, bachelor pastoralists, whose behaviors were the antithesis of "Godly"). I had explained my role as like that of the Aboriginal initiate, passing through a graded series of stages at a place called the "university," where we were put through the "Law" and gained knowledge over time. This analogy seemed to catch

Nevertheless, I would want to qualify BurrIDGE's claim (1973, 206) that "it has been the missionaries who have actually applied themselves to the practical problems of embracing the Aborigines as brothers." Especially prior to the advent of government self-management policies, many missionaries, including some not of a fundamentalist persuasion, were paternalistically relating to them as parent to child rather than as equals (along with most White Australians having face-to-face dealings with Aborigines). Also, the constricted moral universe of most fundamentalist Christian groups precluded them from even addressing this set of practical problems, let alone enfolding Otherness in an egalitarian embrace.¹⁵

The Field Today: The "Triangle" in Contemporary Perspective

In the final chapter of *Encountering Aborigines*—"Man Transformed," which is about the aftermath of the British invasion and Western impacts in Australia—BurrIDGE returns to his comparison of missionaries and anthropologists, and to his major dialectical theme. He also treats a range of related issues concerning crisis, millenarianism, ambiguity, transformational frameworks and the necessity of accommodating diachronic and synchronic perspectives, and so on, and offers stimulating comment on contemporary Aboriginal anthropological studies, their topics, and possible future developments. He begins by noting the contrast between acceptance of, and admiration for, aspects of Aboriginal culture by early commentators at an intellectual level, and the denigration and rejection of them in everyday dealings in colonial Australia. He identifies missionaries as among the few Europeans who tried to treat the Aborigines as brothers and fellow citizens (1973, 203), but were faced with the obvious problem of how to engage values of oneness and brotherhood across the cultural gulf. This observation clearly indicates BurrIDGE's awareness of difficulties in the practical attainment of mutual transformation, but is an arena that he does not single out for closer examination and analysis in his writings.

on well with the men, whose approach to the revelation of secret-sacred knowledge to me was likewise gradualist. When I returned to the mission on my second or third visit, a leading elder proudly told me that, during difficult negotiations with their troublesome northern neighbors in which they remained adamantly opposed to a political union, an exasperated leader of the latter group told the Jigalong men, "Oraet (Alright), you gonna get left out of the Company Mob," (their collective name for themselves, because their White leader had established a mining collective), and that he had retorted, "That's oraet, don' worry; we got a name too you know...we's the Yunabajdi (University) Mob, and we got our roan whitefella too!" I greeted this story with mixed laughter and trepidation, though the latter emotion proved more appropriate, since its implications turned out to be significant for my relationships with both groups in the decades that followed.

15 Many a non-missionary settlement superintendent in the colonial era was every bit as paternalistic and reluctant to embrace the Other as many fundamentalist missionaries. In a reassessment of *The Jigalong Mob* for a volume on Aborigines and Christian missions, I noted that, upon later reflection, many of the negative aspects I had attributed to the missionaries' fundamentalism were in fact characteristic of small non-mission European outposts (see Goodenough 1963; Tonkinson 1988).

The issue of cultural continuities as variables contributing to contemporary social problems harks back to the missionary/anthropologist divide and their respective attitudes towards Aboriginal culture. In his expanded study, *In the Way*, Burrridge (1991, 6) acknowledges that in “some of the historical periods” many missionaries perceived other faiths as “in darkness” or “false” or as “works of the Devil”; but he goes on to claim that “there have always been those who held what is generally accepted as a modern view: that all indigenous religions or privately engaged ethical or moral disciplines are genuine if incomplete responses to an awareness of the one Creator-God that, missionaries believe, Christianity will complete.” The more “modern view” implies a syncretistic and cross-culturally tolerant perspective that strikes me as anathema to avowedly fundamentalist Christians. The missionaries I encountered in the 1960s, for example, remained firmly locked into what Burrridge characterizes as an “earlier” phase, one in which all the change was expected to come from the Aborigines, dramatically recreated as “new men” following the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Until then, mutual *metanoia* was unthinkable inasmuch as it involved any kind of concession extended across the intercultural divide into the gaping darkness of heathenism.

In the decades since Burrridge’s book on Australian Aboriginal studies, there have been many significant changes in church attitudes, missionary and anthropological activities and relations between the two kinds of fieldworker. Many of the tensions and contrasts discussed in *Encountering Aborigines* seem to have lost their salience as a result of transformations that have occurred in the Christianity-missionary-anthropologist-Aboriginal nexus. For example, the Church that ran Jigalong Mission underwent considerable change and a broadened membership base, in terms of education levels and attitudes, as part of a more general growth of Pentecostal and Evangelical churches in Australia. Most, but certainly not all, missionary churches have softened their opposition to Aboriginal culture and show greater manifestation of Burrridge’s “modern” view.¹⁶ In general, the majority have become more ecumenical in spirit, permitting Aboriginal people to be both church adherents and followers of Aboriginal Law, which originates in the Dreaming but is now understood by them to have been originally instituted by “Mama” (“Father”/ “God”). In my view, this more tolerant stance has removed a major stumbling block to improved relationships with anthropologists, who appreciate that in these times of prolonged social trauma, rapid change and uncertainty about the future of their culture, it is not surprising that Aboriginal people may want to see what Christianity offers them that the old ways may not. Syncretism as a social process has long been understood by anthropologists and progressive churches alike; its acceptance and in many cases embrace by certain churches bespeaks the kind of mutual *metanoia* that Burrridge maintains is essential for bridging the cultural divide (cf. Barker 1990a). Today, many missionaries have shed the old paternalistic mantle and social-spatial segregation that characterized the

16 See especially McDonald’s (2001) account of Christianity in the East Kimberley region, where the tenets, preaching and attitudes of the Assemblies of God missionaries today are seemingly as uncompromising in their negative attitudes towards Aboriginal culture (and Roman Catholicism) as the Jigalong missionaries were in the 1960s.

colonial frontier; they are working more collaboratively with Aborigines, often at the latter's behest.

For example, in the mission era at Jigalong the seeds of Christian belief were planted among some of the younger Mardu, and kept alive through the work of two Baptist missionary linguists who through their frequent visits maintained a Christian presence there after the mission closed. The number of self-proclaimed Christians has markedly increased since then, in no small part because most church workers today are less negative towards the Aboriginal pre-Christian past and offer a version of Christian belief that accommodates or affirms the validity of traditional religious worldview.¹⁷ Some years ago the Jigalong community invited the Seventh-Day Adventist Church to establish a base there, and in recent times it has been staffed by Pacific Islander missionaries.

For their part, anthropologists have become increasingly accepting of the inevitability of Westernization's continuing and inexorable infiltration of Aboriginal societies, even in remote areas, and are therefore more realistic and less preoccupied about "preserving" culture. While no less convinced of the importance of continuities from the past in affirming people's identity and bolstering their sense of self, anthropologists today are offering critiques, working collaboratively, addressing stubbornly persistent social problems and holding back from the urge to behave as "secular missionaries" when solutions remain so elusive. Even if it were ever the case, anthropologists cannot be "deceivers" in the sense of Burridge's allegation, since most Aboriginal people today have a better understanding of what scholarly enquiry should involve. Also, professional codes of ethics are operating from the scholars' side with the aim of maximizing the collaborative and consultative aspects of anthropologists' relationships with the communities or groups with whom (and increasingly for whom, thanks to a burgeoning demand by Aboriginal land councils and communities for applied anthropologists) they conduct field research.

In both ethical and moral terms, then, there is a more honest and open relationship, a positive development that has been made easier by the convergence of professional and political interests entailed in the land rights movement. Ever since the Northern Territory legislation of 1976, increasing numbers of anthropologists have been engaged alongside lawyers, working as cultural translators and producing documentation on "law and custom," including land tenure systems. Also important is proof of continuing Aboriginal connection to their lands, which has become

17 As if to illustrate this point, this morning my wife was talking with one of our Mardu houseguests, a senior Law woman who also counts herself a member of the Baptist Church (see M. Tonkinson 1985). Prompted by the preaching of an American evangelist on the television, she offered an unsolicited example of this syncretistic thinking. She said that she has thought a lot about the Christian message and realizes that long ago, when her people were living in the desert, they were guided by God to find food and water. "*Mama*" ("Father"/"God") ensured their survival even though they knew nothing of Him. She cites as examples two old Mardu, both very good Law-abiding people who did not swear or kill or break the Ten Commandments, and they lived very long lives and died peacefully from natural causes. "We are all born in sin and that's because of two people, Adam and Eve." In other words, even people who did not know the Christian message could escape God's punishment by living good lives.

essential to the mounting of claims made under The Native Title Act (1993). This is the enabling legislation for the historic 1992 High Court ruling (“the Mabo decision”) that affirmed the existence of native title and exposed the legal fiction, *terra nullius*, via which the British took possession of the entire continent without treaty or compensation. In their exhaustive searches for validating materials, anthropologists have in some cases called upon missionary knowledge and writings, in a cooperative endeavor based on, in most cases, shared sentiments about the moral rightness of Aboriginal struggles to regain some of their ancestral lands.¹⁸

Conclusion

No account of Christian missionary endeavor or anthropological fieldwork, or of intercultural encounters along and beyond the European-indigenous frontier, can avoid engaging with ethical, moral and political issues. Moral evaluations stand at the core of the missionary’s role when assessing a given indigenous culture and social system against the yardstick provided by the tenets and teachings of his or her church, and surely not a day of fieldwork passes without the researcher having to confront and resolve moral issues intrinsic to participant observation. As to differences in perspectives, attitudes and methodologies separating Burridge’s two kinds of “missionary,” I have avoided discussion of the most obvious ones, because these have been well canvassed elsewhere in considerable detail.¹⁹ Instead, I have focused on elements of missionary worldview and their connections to intercultural interactions that seem neglected in the anthropological literature. I have sought to show that, in the case of fundamentalist Christian missions at least, a low tolerance for cultural difference stems directly from church understandings about the nature of the indigenous Other, leading to outcomes that fall far short of the generally positive composite portrait painted by Ken Burridge of missionary endeavor.

Of course, the constricted worldviews concomitant with Christian fundamentalism will not go away, despite a contemporary emphasis on ecumenism and the minimization of damaging sectarian differences. Burridge quite rightly chides us for failing to devote sufficient attention and energy to the intensive study of missionary work, especially if we aspire to a balanced account of cultural dynamics. I have suggested that, as anthropologists, we should be paying close attention to both church teachings about, and missionary constructions of, the indigenous Other in assessing the likelihood that any given mission will achieve the beneficence of spirit and action that Burridge identifies as predominant in missionary endeavor. I found it at Jigalong in the 1960s, but it was a very small presence, buried by the majority’s inability

18 But see McDonald (2001) for sentiments opposed to Aboriginal land rights expressed by evangelical missionaries and Aboriginal converts in the east Kimberley region. These must be weighed against the generally much more positive views expressed by mainline churches in terms of social justice about Aboriginal people’s rights and duties as custodians of land.

19 See, for example, Hughes (1978), an ex-missionary and professional anthropologist who offers a lucid account of mutual biases and differing perspectives. Also, in addition to Burridge’s own signal contribution, see the two major edited volumes (Boutilier et al. 1978; Swain and Rose 1988) on missionaries and Christianity in Oceania and Aboriginal Australia.

to see the Aborigines as fully realized moral beings and their culture as anything other than the work of the Devil. As long as such conceptions exist, extension of the missionaries' moral universe to include those they are seeking to convert would seem an impossible task for as long as the latter remain somehow "deficient," as well as "lost in the great darkness." Such a constricted morality should be readily evident in political action, which will favor paternalism and behaviors based on racist convictions that their charges are congenitally incapable of thinking and doing for themselves in a Westernizing world.

More than forty years after my initial fieldwork at Jigalong, there is a very different calculus in evidence, for both field anthropologists and church workers, in addressing the real enemy of Aboriginal advancement: the disfiguring effects of powerful historical and social forces that have bred poverty, racism, ill-health, marginalization, dislocation, unemployment, and so on. The pressing need to do more about these and ease Aboriginal suffering is recognized by all Australians of conscience, so the differences separating the secular from the religious "missionary," while certainly not extinguished, are less compelling than formerly. Knowledge, for example about Aboriginal alcohol abuse, is being widely shared and promulgated across disciplinary and interest-group boundaries as scholars theorize about, and communities and community workers look to implement, new and better strategies and solutions to this and other long-term debilitating social problems. These changes in relationships and perspectives would, I am sure, be warmly endorsed by Ken Burridge, whose writings have done so much to clarify what is needed for both kinds of field "missionary" to engage in a productive and morally strong embrace of Otherness.

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 11

Reaching for the Absolute¹

F. G. Bailey

A Triple Hermeneutic

We make sense of societies and cultures, as we make sense of anything at all, by using templates to direct attention at some features and block others out. The procedure, of course, has opportunity costs and one may always ask what would have appeared—what further understanding might have been possible—if an alternative template had also been applied.

Insofar as the purpose of social anthropology is to understand how people understand their world, there is a double hermeneutic: anthropologists construct templates to provide access to the templates that others—in the instance of this book, mainly Melanesians and missionaries—construct to make their world meaningful. My essay, which is a commentary on some general themes suggested by this book, requires me to navigate a triple hermeneutic;² level three contains the templates that I use to gain access to (level two) the prejudices, preconceptions, ideologies, philosophical underpinnings or conceptual frameworks that the contributors and their honorand use to gain access to (level one) the local templates, which are the beliefs and values that guide the conduct of the people whose societies and cultures are being described and (sometimes) explained.³

1 For their comments on this essay I am grateful to Susan Love Brown, Heather Claussen, Roy D'Andrade, Jim Holston, Michael Meeker, Eloise Hiebert Meneses, Julie Monteleone, Joel Robbins, and Donald Tuzin. Thanks also to John Barker for inviting me to contribute.

2 “Hermeneutic” (the art of interpretation) lies somewhere between “deconstruct” and “expound.” “Deconstruct” suggests hostility, an intention to uncover intellectual (and sometimes moral) inadequacies. “Expound” is like parsing or construing; it makes no comment on the quality of what is written or the motivations of the writer. It does have a whiff of condescension, a suggestion of talking down to an intellectually challenged reader. “Hermeneutic” also has a hint of this, because it implies that the critic’s templates give him or her insights that would not be obvious to everyone and perhaps were not to the writer. By the time I finish I should know (or you can decide) which of these three words best describes what I have done; I am aiming for a modest and constructive hermeneutic. Certainly I have no thoughts about conclusively deciding a profound but amiably-managed difference of opinion discovered more than fifty years ago when Ken Burridge and I were students together at Exeter College, Oxford.

3 *Local* will have to do duty for what in less sensitive days I would have called *native* or *folk*. Level-two and level-three ideas might have been labeled *analytic* or *theoretical*, and level one *practical*. I have not done this because level one has its own theorists, and level-two

My elementary templates (level three) are set out in the paragraphs above and more will emerge as I go along.⁴ About level one, crucial though it is, I cannot contribute much because all that I know about local templates comes from the contributors and, of course, from their colleagues, teachers, and predecessors, in particular from Ken Burridge. Therefore I will concentrate on a selection of the presuppositions deployed at the second level.⁵ This task is not without difficulty because sometimes it is hard for me to know whether or not what is offered as a local template is really a level-two template foisted onto the locals because the writer has already decided on its universality. I will come back to this problem later.

Level two presuppositions are manifested in the ideas, both substantive and methodological, that the contributors choose to present. These concern three connected fields: religion and morality, politics, and change. (i) Religious ideas, when defined by substance, concern cosmologies, which are imaginative constructs that give authoritative meaning to first principles deployed to understand experience; they also concern moralities, which are prescriptive definitions of right and wrong conduct. (ii) Political ideas are about power and its distribution in the context of social interaction; power, in my framework, is the capacity to make people do something, whether they want to or not, whether or not they are aware of what is being done to them. (iii) Change-templates create (or discover) patterns that describe how (and sometimes explain why) ideas about the distribution of power and ideas about cosmology and morality change.

A theme that underlies all three fields and pervades Ken Burridge's writings is the opposition between an advantage template (we do things for our own benefit) and a moral-person template (we do things, even when disadvantageous, because our conscience tells us to). My modest goal is to show that understanding in all three fields (religion, politics, and change) requires the use of both templates, and, second, that an insistent focus on one template may lead to the inadvertent or (*absit omen!*) surreptitious use of its rival. In other words it is bad methodology to believe that either one of these templates subsumes the other or that some third template can encompass them both. We should be content to use both parts of what Burridge calls "the dialectic between rational objectivity and the participatory values..." (1973, 41) and (he does not say this) forget about the impossible synthesis.

I will begin by asking what complexities are contained in the moral-person template.

theorists can have other goals besides finding the truth—for example, winning the argument, defining the situation, and calling the shots.

4 Having never had an epiphany that would fully clear positivist ideas out of my system and, even worse, being tone-deaf to the music of revealed religion (and probably of natural religion too), as I consort with this company of scholars I feel (borrowing from Auden) "like a shabby curate who has strayed by mistake into a drawing room full of dukes." Nor is the situation made easier by my not being a Melanesianist.

5 The selection is a function of my own templates. It is a selection, not a comprehensive review.

Public and Private Moralities⁶

The adjective *religious* also has a meaning that rises above substance. In this mode a religious idea is an absolute, a first principle, an eternal verity, categorical; it is not contingent, not hypothetical; it is to be taken on faith and is, so to speak, its own justification. Any idea offered as an indisputable premise from which to reason about conduct or about events and experiences is, in this definition, a religious idea. In that context doubt and questioning are not heuristic procedures, but sins. That is how I understand “religion is concerned with the truth of things” or “those more rooted assumptions we call faith...These assumptions are community truths, truths which command a consensus” (Burridge 1969a, 5). I think that the last sentence means that religious ideas are what people *claim* to be the certain truth (“gospel truth”); they are not “truth itself,” which in my template is a construct, imaginary and perfectly untestable, that we entertain for our comfort, our intellectual convenience, and because the idea has rhetorical and political uses.⁷ It follows that ideas differentiated by content—economic, political, and so on—may or may not also have religious standing.⁸

Do moral rules have religious standing? Are they held as absolutes? It depends on how “moral” is defined. Defined one way they are; defined another way they cannot be absolute and in practical affairs they yield their guidance to an advantage template. The meaning depends on how right and wrong are authenticated. There is a Decalogist’s divinely-given morality: an “articulate discrimination between right and wrong action” (1973, 21), a set of commandments that, believed to come from God, present themselves as self-justifying, absolute, unambiguous and invariable, whatever might be the mundane consequence of following them—Weber’s *ethic of absolute ends* or, in a similar absolutist vein, Gandhi’s “In matters of conscience, the law of majority has no place,” or what Isaiah Berlin calls *private* morality.

Public morality is Weber’s *ethic of responsibility* and, I think, is a variant of what Burridge calls *participatory values* (1973, 41). Let me use a scrap of local ethnography to show what the idea means, where it leads, and how it may connect with the divinely-given *ethic of absolute ends*. Half a lifetime ago the office of our newly-founded department was managed by a much-respected *grande dame* (henceforth *GD*), who was a consummate manipulator of the academic bureaucracy; she never failed to make sure that we got at least our fair share (and often more) of whatever was up for grabs. She was also a devout Roman Catholic. Nearing retirement, she confessed to our then chairman: “Oh dear! When I think of the things I have done for this department, I sometimes wonder if I will go to heaven.”

Given her Catholic faith, I think that those ironic misgivings about her prospects for the next world (I hope they were ironic) came out of an absolutist definition of right and wrong. Success in administrative politics, as in any political arena, requires some shafting, which from time to time must have surfaced, suitably phrased, in

6 The adjectives are taken from an essay by Isaiah Berlin (1980, 25-79).

7 These ideas are given more space in Bailey (2003).

8 In the Op Ed pages and the correspondence columns of my local paper (Southern California) the idea of a free-market economy generally has the status of a religious truth.

the confessional-box. But *GD*'s morality can also be of the kind that is implicit in such phrases as "participatory impulses and emotions" (Burridge 1973, 10), or "participation in oneness" (10) or when "animal man" is set against the "requirements of a community" (32), or in the strikingly-phrased conditional clause, "if man [were] an animal rather than word..." (33). In short, this kind of morality has to do with belonging to a community; it is Berlin's *public* morality.

When *GD* referred to the department and the service she had given it, she spoke indirectly to the "requirements of a community". But her "participatory impulses and emotions" must also have led her in many other directions: to her husband and family, certainly to her Church, probably also (although less certainly because calculation of advantage could be involved) to the network of elderly "girl friends" scattered around the university in strategic managerial positions, and to the many other settings where she did things more for love than for gain. Unfortunately, given alternative communities, there is a high probability that in practice to bestow love in one direction will sometimes be to withhold it in another. The allocation of love, which is a denial of indebtedness and an affirmation of moral equivalence (Burridge 1960, 81-84) and of "participation in oneness", would then be an exercise in what Lionel Robbins, defining his discipline (neoclassical economics), said was the study of "human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses" (1935, 16). In other words, since there is never enough love to go round, the *practice* of moral equivalence calls for economizing. That seems to be an impairment of the moral idea, because it has reduced love to a commodity—a source of material advantage—that can be divided up and rationed out.

GD's problem, as I have constructed it, arose because in practice the participatory definition of morality fragments *the* moral community and creates multiple moral communities potentially in competition with one another. The idea of moral equivalence is then rendered self-contradictory: as in the case of *Animal Farm*, all those who participate are by definition morally equivalent, but in practice some are more equivalent than others. Love has been tainted with utility. That sounds like a perversion of the moral idea, which in its divinely-given form reaches always for the absolute. Nevertheless the experience is all too real: moral dilemmas are a distressing fact of social life. Therefore it makes sense to admit their existence and then (always assuming that people are uncomfortable with uncertainty and imperatively in need of absolutes) to ask what templates they—anthropologists and locals—use or could use to make such situations less intolerable. Some metaphysical leg-work is required before "participation in oneness" can show the way to "the truth of things."

A problem for any anthropologist who is deeply committed to the moral tendency is to create a participatory version of morality (amity or moral equivalence) that is not self-contradictory, and at the same time quarantine the contaminating idea of rational choice, which is the use of an advantage (cost/benefit) template by "self-willed" individuals (Burridge 1975, 92). One way to do this is to make a template for "community" that is abstract enough—and therefore catholic (all-embracing)—to make contradictions vanish, because "participation in oneness" means not only that the individual is identified with and effaced in a community, becoming "no one" and losing personhood, but also that the community is itself one, undivided, and all-encompassing. Logically, such a community could not be structured into

complementary roles, each with distinctive rights and duties; no one is in debt to another, and all are equivalent. It reveals “a condition of being in which humans become free movers, in which there are no obligations, in which all earthly desires are satisfied and therefore expunged” (Burridge 1969a, 165). If there are no obligations there can be no contradiction between them. We are delivered not so much from sin and its consequences by the Redeemer, which is the everyday sense of redemption, but from the entire apparatus of rights and duties and their inevitable moral dilemmas. Moral dilemmas have been resolved by removing the need to make choices.⁹ This is the ultimate form of participation and the ultimate beatitude; it does not produce a community that is an organic construct of complementary obligations but a community of pure fellow-feeling. It is the Buddhist Nirvana and the Jain Moksha, where one is absorbed into the divinity, all desires extinguished, all conflict ended, and perfect peace achieved. It is akin to Turner’s “*communitas*,” and it is Burridge’s “redemption.” In that way *GD*’s moral dilemma (having to economize on love) is resolved by postulating an imaginary community (heaven) in which there can be no conflicting obligations because there are no obligations.

Three questions suggest themselves: (i) “Is there a heaven?” (ii) “Do people believe there is?” and (iii) “Is this set of ideas about mutual indebtedness and freedom from obligation psychologically real, and if so, how is it manifested?” The second question is easily answered: some people do and some do not (and they do not all mean the same thing by “heaven”). My answer to the first question (I said I was tone-deaf to revealed religion) would be that heaven exists only as the set of ideas specified in the third question.

The answer to the third question is no less clear: those ideas do exist. I can think immediately of four obvious ways in which they are made apparent. First, Burridge’s ethnography testifies to the psychological reality of notions about indebtedness and equivalence. Second, they exist in our everyday experience: we know what it means to be overburdened with duties; we worry about how others will fulfill their obligations to us; and we are tormented by moral dilemmas. At times it is not difficult to empathize with “Stop the world; I want to get off!”¹⁰ Third, the same basic idea—freedom from the structured life—is acted out, for instance, in carnival or in “‘Pentecostal’ activity as overemphatic relapses into participation in oneness” (Burridge 1973, 19). Fourth, the idea of heaven-as-burdenless pervades sermons, scriptures, and popular culture.

In short, the notion of indebtedness does indeed capture a common (but not ever-present) way of thinking about life in society: “The human condition appears as one of general indebtedness: a feature that we acknowledge in variations of the aphorism ‘paying our debt to society’” (Burridge 1969a). The idea is certainly there. But, returning to the mundane world, in what *practical* way does the construct solve *GD*’s here-and-now moral dilemmas? If she accepts Weber’s *ethic of responsibility*

9 Paradoxically, as I will show later, the advantage template also effectively does away with choice by countenancing only one kind of choice, which is utility.

10 In the agonistic constructs of psychoanalytic theory there is a Nirvana principle, which is a longing for the non-existence that would give release from tension between “institutional demands” and “instinctual wishes” (Freud 1975).

and works out who will be least hurt if short-changed on love, and if she does so rationally (that is, by applying a cost/benefit template), her action does not solve the moral problem; it sets it aside. Alternatively, she can abandon both rationality and the participatory version of morality and take refuge in the (by definition infallible) private domain where she will find the answer in prayer, a procedure that gives intuitive access to fundamental moral truth—to “the truth of things.”

The distinction between public (participatory) and private (God-given) morality has produced what is, to my mind, a curious tendency to elevate the latter and deplore the former, to the extent, even, of denying public morality its status as any kind of morality at all, despite the fact that public-morality standards are in everyday use. Robbins points to a “split” between ethics and politics in present-day societies. He does not mean, he is careful to say, that claims about right and wrong are absent from the modern political arena; politicians discourse endlessly on their own probity and on the turpitude of their rivals. He means that while moral discourse is everywhere, moral motivation is conspicuously out of sight: politicians are unscrupulous, or (to recall what we should be looking at) that is what most people believe about political leaders.¹¹ It is a familiar topic, a commonplace not only among media moralizers but also among the politicians themselves—an irony, perhaps, but in my rhetoric-template perfectly understandable because moral discourse is a handy political weapon. Nor is the claim a feature only of our times. Cicero said it: “*O tempora, O mores!*” So did Disraeli: “In politics nothing is contemptible.” And there’s this *www* gem on “good politicians:” “I would pick Clinton. He’s rotten to the core, he’s had affairs, lotsa people hate him but he is a really good politician. A brilliant one, I might venture to say.”¹²

The split, Robbins suggests, is evidenced in appeals to *raison d’état*. When politicians do things that in any other milieu would be considered contemptible (except, I suppose, in free-market economics), they—even those caught red-handed—appeal to a “higher” morality: they say they did it for “reason of state.” The end justifies the means; in other words, they are appealing to an *ethic of responsibility*. Machiavelli, the poster-child for *raison d’état*, argued, it seems to me quite reasonably, that only force and deception—*per forza o per frode*—made winning possible and only a winner could end the violence and disorder that afflicted 15th century Italy. “A handbook for gangsters,” was Bertrand Russell’s verdict on *The Prince*, according to Isaiah Berlin (1980, 35). Russell’s own account (1946, 525-32) is more thoughtful, as is the long essay by Berlin himself, in which he remarks on the extreme diversity of verdicts on *The Prince* and on its author’s morals. Noticing a high incidence of disapproval, he links it to Machiavelli’s refusal (which he finds admirable) to be moved by the totality-itch into fudging a compromise between public (*raison d’état*) and private (God-given) moralities in order to falsely present the social world as “a

11 I have not found it easy, either in my own writing or in reading these articles, to locate the boundary between level-two and level-one hermeneutics, in this instance between “politicians cheat” and “people believe that politicians cheat.”

12 Hitler and Stalin made the short-list too.

single intelligible structure” (1980, 25-79).¹³ I will come back later to that search for “a single intelligible structure.”

It is not immediately obvious why anyone should dismiss an appeal to “reason of state,” which is in fact a claim made in the idiom of an ethic of responsibility and of participatory morality, and downgrade it as *realpolitik*, mere cynicism, no morality at all or at best a morality vastly inferior to the God-given kind. In fact it isn’t obvious that people regularly do so; it depends on how the question is posed. Replace *realpolitik* with *pro bono publico* or “the public weal” or “the common good” (or even *raison d’état*) and morality, for some of the audience, will come back on stage, depending, of course, on which “public” is privileged. Nevertheless it is the case, I admit, that, particularly if one stays in the realm of ideals and away from specific cases, absolute morality seems to have an appeal and an authority that public morality does not. True-believers are by definition not two-faced; you know where they stand; you can depend on them. Constancy is valued; uncertainty and ambiguity are not. Most people are immediately made uncomfortable by the idea that things done in *realpolitik*, which are disgraceful by the standards of private morality, might seem to be justifiable by appeal to one or another public morality. Why should this be disquieting? It could be that those who plead *raison d’état* are more likely to be duplicitous than those who invoke God-given moral codes; I can’t think how the counting could be done, but intuitively it does not seem likely. True-believers also lie when it furthers the goals of their true-belief. The assumption—I am still in an intuitive mode—that provides the likeliest explanation is mentioned by Dalton (Chapter 3) when he complains about utilitarianism (a form of participatory morality) and other consequentialist theories: they cannot provide “any certainty regarding the appropriateness of an ethical choice.” In other words we dread the void; we want our centers to hold, things not to fall apart.¹⁴

But just who is disquieted by this uncertainty? Undoubtedly, as I said earlier, we are distressed when conflicting moral obligations make it difficult to decide what is the right thing to do. But morality-agonizing is not the whole of life. Ordinary Joe and Ordinary Jane may sometimes be moved by thoughts that could be reasonably summarized as “redemption,” but they do not spend their days and nights in search of it. They also enjoy getting and spending and often are unmoved by thoughts of moral equivalence or amity; they even like to win. Life has more to it than moral dilemmas. Sometimes, of course, issues come up that are big enough to be crippling.¹⁵ But much of the time things sort themselves out, or fate intervenes and the dilemma fades away. Ordinary Joe and Jane can stand a lot of untidiness and contradiction in their lives.

But if we shift the focus from them (level one) and consider ourselves (levels two and three), then we are looking at people whose vocation, whether intellectual or spiritual or both, does not allow them to put up with loose ends and contradictions,

13 The sentences on Machiavelli are imported, more or less verbatim, from Bailey (2003).

14 It is possible, of course, that this dread is not something primal and absolute, but only a calculation of the disutility that is to be expected when things fall apart.

15 See the chapters on LBJ in Bailey (2001).

because to do so is to give up on the search for “the truth of things.” In other words, this might be a case of level two concepts being thrust more firmly and more widely onto level one than the evidence warrants. That remark, of course, would apply not only to moral-template-users but also—an issue in the following section—to users of the advantage template.

There is even a case to be made that people (at level one) do not always consider moral certainty a good thing, or believe that those who display it ought thereby to be respected.¹⁶ The external world, both natural and man-created, constantly changes and what at one time appears to be a moral absolute at another time might not. It can be said, of course, that whatever changed could not have been a moral absolute, but our problem is to discover not how things “really” are, but how people understand their worlds; in that case what is gospel in one place and at one time may, at other times and in other places, become illusion; people change their minds. There is room, in other words, in both level-two and level-one hermeneutics (it is already in level three) for the possibility that wheeling and dealing in contradictory moralities (of either kind) is not only an accurate description of what goes on but also may be a situation preferable to the “oneness” created by fanatics who truly believe in their own exclusionary version of “the truth of things.”

The Advantage Template, Change, and Morality

The advantage template, which is the neoclassical economist’s expected-utility paradigm, has not been widely used in social anthropology, probably because it deals in a very cavalier fashion with level-one templates (anthropology’s mother-lode). It assumes that social behavior is motivated solely by utility. We are rational (as the economists use that word) which means that we are moved by prospective gains or losses and are perfectly amoral, uninfluenced by ethical considerations of right and wrong. These presuppositions are not offered as the exclusive truth about human nature but only as a premise on which to construct theories to explain or predict human behavior. The human-nature question is easily disposed of: it is in our nature sometimes to be amoral and sometimes to be moral in our dealings with other people. That is why we need both kinds of template. The advantage template explains what happens when people decide to be amoral. The fact that they may also be moved by moral considerations is not denied but is simply bracketed out of the reckoning by putting it into a *ceteris paribus* category.¹⁷ In this way society can be modeled as a natural system that deals with behavior, not with conduct.¹⁸

16 The same is surely true at level two in the case of intellectual obstinacy—an unwillingness to question presuppositions or acknowledge the limited applicability of favored templates.

17 More than morality goes into the perpetually-pending *ceteris-paribus* tray. The unmodified expected-utility model ignores the limits set on rational calculation by limited computational ability, limited access to information, and limited diligence.

18 Those who are careful with words distinguish behavior from conduct. We can deplore an animal’s behavior (or even a machine’s) but not its conduct, because neither machines nor animals have consciences. Machines are indisputably amoral. There are extensive discussions

Both templates have their uses because each asks questions that the other does not. Both—at a high level of abstraction—fulfill the same function: they are ways of finding order and predictability in social life. The two kinds of order, however, are different. A moral order is presented not as a lived-in actuality but as an aspiration—something good that is to be striven for, a goal that directs actions but is never fully realized. The moral order resides in our perceptions of it as the intended product of people following their consciences. The order in natural systems—planets, tides, seasons, organisms, evolution, neoclassical economics, rational-choice political science—is also an idea in our minds but it is offered as an objective reality and also as something that is unintended; it is spontaneous, natural, God-given, so to speak; no one (except God) aimed for it or could have designed it.

The advantage template, like Machiavelli, gets a sour reception from positivism-intolerant morality-concerned social scientists, and it is easy to see why. Its presuppositions seem to dehumanize us by bracketing out not only ethical choice but also our capacity to make any choice other than the one that maximizes utility; we can only follow the advantage-road and to that extent we are as predictable as machines. But this is a presupposition, a premise; to object to it on moral grounds (that it is distasteful, insulting, and amoral) is to forget its methodological status. It is a tool; it discovers spontaneous statistical regularity—a natural order in social life—that remains hidden when only a moral template is used.¹⁹ It also directs attention at strategic and tactical “how-to-win” templates, which people use (openly at level one and covertly at level two) when they seek advantage.²⁰ Advantage templates, along with moral templates, make the social world meaningful both at level one and at level two.

Underlying both templates is a basic systems model: structured entities, whether natural or moral, exist in an environment that changes of its own accord, and the entity, to survive, must make the appropriate adjustments in its structure. It is taken for granted in expected-utility models (and belligerently upheld in the folklore of the free-market) that societies best adjust to changing conditions through the agency of individuals who are motivated not by the public good but by their own advantage. Out of their actions emerges a new regularity that is better adjusted to external conditions. In other words, let the market handle whatever is malfunctioning—the school system, hospitals, prisons, parking or any other kind of institutional service.²¹ The process of change envisaged is usually incremental, not radical; and it is a natural process, in the same way that evolutionary change is natural; no one designed or

about apparently altruistic behavior between animals, which might be construed as evidence of amity or moral equivalence—“fairness” is the favored term—but I cannot imagine any behavior that would exhibit the idea of redemption. Animal behavior, however, unlike that of machines, is motivated and up to a point can be explained as a function of expected utility.

19 You can, of course, uncover unintended patterns in moral choices, as in a survey of social-science-student opinions on cheating: only the economists thought they had a natural right to do so.

20 I write “covertly” because at level two the goal is (supposedly) not to defeat an opponent but, in the manner of Gandhi’s *satyagraha*, to struggle jointly to uncover the truth.

21 One might make the case that in present-day America foreign policy is significantly market-driven.

intended it. Hayek (1988) maintained that institutions (he calls them “traditions”) are not the product of reasoning but are naturally selected by “success”—by the test of whether or not they work. Therefore models of social change, being evolutionary, need take no account of ideas that people have about the way the world does work (cosmologies) or should work (moralities). Order in a social system (including the moral order) is a product of natural evolution.

Presented in that way the advantage model pre-empts morality and it is full of holes,²² but it does raise a problem for those concerned with the moral part of a social system: incremental changes in level-one templates, both moral and advantage, take place through the agency of individuals. As North puts it: “Incremental change comes from the perception of the entrepreneurs in political and economic organizations that they could do better by altering the existing institutional framework at some margin” (1990, 8). While the difference between, for example, one political system and its successor can be described in purely structural terms, understanding the change from one to the other requires the idea of an individual as agent. But the individual who features in the advantage template is motivated by self-interest. For anti-positivists the task then is to modify the template so as to make a place for morality: either moral sensibility must be grafted onto advantage-seeking agents, or, failing that, at least it must be shown that their actions have some moral significance.

In Melanesian studies, I understand, morality needs a boost, because the actions of Big Men—wheeling and dealing to build up a following in what looks like a neoclassical free market (no regulatory agencies)—seem to fit so readily into the advantage template that the moral significance of what they do has been overlooked. This is an abiding problem at the level-two/level-one interface. The Robbins “split” between ethics and politics, said to be characteristic of modern Western societies, has been transferred from level two templates to level one and mistakenly visited on the Melanesians. But, it is argued, Melanesians do not see their societies in that way: they do factor in morality when they think about politics and politicians, and, unlike his Western counterpart, the Melanesian politician is not, by definition, a cad.

A simple way to re-insert morality into a level-two template is to keep the idea of an initiative-taking individual but drop the exclusive amorality, thus making room for what North calls a “trade-off between moral conviction and self-interest.” People sometimes choose to do what is right even when they know the material pay-off will be negative.²³ This modified template is recognized in the distinction that Burridge makes between “individualism” and “individuality” (1991; see, for instance, Burridge 1979). Individualism is (following Dumont) “peculiar to Western

22 I point to some of them in Bailey (2003). One large hole is its inability to handle *metanoia*, spiritual conversion, or any other event that involves emotion and “irrational” attachment to principles.

23 This continues to be a problem for those neoclassical economists who pay attention to institutions because, granted the trade-off’s negative slope (people follow their conscience only when it does not cost too much), they cannot explain the exceptions. “We simply do not have any convincing theory of knowledge that accounts for the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of organized ideologies or accounts for choices made when the payoffs to honesty, integrity, working hard, or voting are negative” (North 1990, 42). Religion, this implies, does not provide a “convincing theory of knowledge.”

civilization” and foregrounds the amoral entrepreneur who seeks advantage “at some margin.” Individuality, by contrast, describes a “moral innovator” (Burridge 1991, 55), one whose goal is to maintain or restore moral equivalence when a changing social and political environment threatens its existence.

The ideal of a purely moral innovator, entirely uncontaminated by considerations of advantage, would be like the heavenly version of the one-and-indivisible moral community—not a reality but an imagined thing invoked when the complexity of the real world makes a mess of theories constructed to understand it. In Christianity and in other organized religions there are reformers who are avowed moral innovators—missionaries, for example—but what they do as innovators cannot be adequately comprehended without the use of an advantage template. Reformers are out to win and they meet resistance; if they are to implant a revised morality in other minds they must use one or another form of power—force or persuasive rhetoric or that kind of bribery which is the promise of a better life; and the exercise of such power is a denial of moral equivalence, even when its goal is moral equivalence. In other words, to play the game by the rules of moral equivalence is to lose it. The only escape from this dilemma is to say that the reformer’s goal—conversion, a generalized *metanoia*—justifies the means.²⁴ In short, the moral innovator is also a politician who faces the continuing dilemma of a trade-off between morality and effectiveness. Nor is the problem only in his conscience; it is also in the perception that others have of him: they may decide that he is a hypocrite motivated not by the love that he preaches but by the power that his preaching gives him.

How, then, does a Big Man—not a professed moral innovator, contaminated by power-plays—demonstrate moral significance? I counted several ways. First, if he is to maintain a following, he must treat his followers as if they were morally equivalent. Power has to be hidden behind a façade of amity and equality, and at least to that extent moral equivalence is propagated as a social value, even when it is used to gain power. I suppose that is the case: “I am not a crook” acknowledged that crookedness was wrong, even when it was said by a crook. Another way, which amounts to the same thing, is to invoke the maxim that law is maintained most strongly when it is breached. Big Men, when they overreach themselves and resort to sorcery, are inadvertently reminding everyone that sorcery is a wicked thing (or, on the other hand, that it is a good thing if it is visited on people who deserve it, because they do not belong in the same moral community and are trying to take advantage). *Raison d’état* again. I can imagine such a claim having a place in a level-one template, at least among those in Melanesia inclined to sophistry: the good outcome is an *unintended* consequence of wicked actions. Third—likewise a *raison d’état* but inverted—Big Men function like Lyndon Baines Johnson: they wheel and deal and manipulate and, from behind a screen of affability, they shaft people right and left, but in the end they bring to their social world a new and desirable kind of order that would have been impossible for anyone who always played the game by

24 The god-given version of morality does not have this problem. Its oneness is not amity or equivalence but veneration for the Lord. God is in no one’s debt; everyone is in God’s. “Be still and know that I *am* God” (Psalm 46.10) is phrased as paternalistic authority, not as amity or equivalence.

the Queensberry Rules. Once again, the end justifies the means, the good this time being the *intended* consequence of doing unethical things.

What are we to make of this? The framing argument is surely correct: Melanesians, other than the professional economists among them, probably do not think of their society as a natural system. (Neither does Ordinary Joe or Jane here.) But that does not mean that Melanesians are innocent of the notion on which expected-utility paradigms are based: individuals sometimes act in their own self-interest. They recognize such people—outside of heaven the notion must be ubiquitous—and among them are the Big Men. “Still, because there comes a time when a manager, reaching the limits of his productive capacity to cope with a widening circle of exchange relationships... has to use personal qualities of persuasion to obtain credit, the temptation to resort to sorcery is almost irresistible” (Burridge 1979, 126). Sorcery is the negation of moral equivalence.

A more developed version of the boiler-plate justifications presented above is offered by Burridge and exemplified by Joel Robbins in this volume: Big Men symbolize the moral dilemma that everyone faces. “[A Big Man] reveals to others the kinds of moral conflict in which they are involved” (Burridge 1975, 87). Big Men are public figures; they are on stage and when they resolve the moral dilemma they demonstrate to others how to cope with life’s difficulties. They show other people that moral dilemmas need not be crippling: people learn how to negotiate a “treacherous moral domain...by watching how the big men pick their way through it.”²⁵

But how do they do it? As I read both the ethnography and the generalized statements about Big-Man conduct and its motivation, their trade-off solution accords with North’s negative sloping curve: forget the ethics. They know that it is impossible to win the game if they stay within the bounds of moral equivalence. There does not seem to be much finesse about it; Big Men simply defy the rules. They push people around. They gamble in a free market, they poach each other’s clients by raising the ante, and when they cannot cover their bets they forget about moral rectitude and resort to strong-arm tactics by cultivating a reputation for sorcery, which signals power and negates moral equivalence. In short, in that frame their conduct is not simply *amoral*, as it would be when framed by an advantage template: it is emphatically *immoral*. How then are they “moral exemplars”?

The answer, which Joel Robbins provides, is this: Big men do unethical things but their actions have moral significance. By their readiness to disregard moral equivalence, to be “self-willed,” to stand forward and refuse to efface themselves, they are able to do the “heavy lifting” needed to get things done; their “moral transgressions” are “socially productive” and in this way they make it possible for the less “self-willed” majority to live virtuous lives. Furthermore, rule-breaking may be a necessary step on the way to constructing a new social order and a new morality that is adapted to a changed environment.

What moralities are involved in this scenario? At first reading there is one basic and unambiguous value: amity and moral equivalence, against which Big Men sin.

25 Citations in this section, if not otherwise attributed, are from Joel Robbins, this volume.

But if one steps further back, the picture changes. From that viewpoint what Big Men do when they defy the norms of moral equivalence is demonstrate that equivalence is in competition with a different kind of morality: paternalism, the respect that is legitimately owed by subordinates to their superior. Furthermore, behind both it and moral equivalence the Melanesians, as the remark about “heavy lifting” indicates, may have a morality that encompasses both the lesser ones. The transcendent value is the preservation of social order, based on whatever secondary morality serves that purpose. If that were not the case, why would they not only tolerate but even endorse (always assuming they do) Big Men’s “moral transgressions”?²⁶

The “bad actions, good consequences” formula puts at risk the construal of a social system as a moral system. Free-market defenders in this country sometimes make use of the following paradoxical argument: the admittedly amoral *homo economicus*, doing his best to shaft everyone he encounters, is in fact the savior of civilization and therefore the ultimately moral person (even if unwitting), because it is his agency that allows social systems to adapt to changing circumstances. Without the wheeling and dealing, things would fall apart and there would be no social order and therefore no morality. Unethical actions keep morality afloat. *Homo economicus* does not intend this or consciously seek to maintain social order; he just wants the best deal he can get for himself. Yet the outcome is the preservation of society. In other words, the social order is a natural order. Is that not exactly the implication of the remark about Big Men’s “heavy lifting”?

The answer to that question depends on which templates house the “bad actions, good consequences” formula. Obviously it is present at level two (the anthropologists) but, if it is *only* there, then the notion of a social system as a moral system has been lost: the social order is a natural order. “Bad actions, good consequences” construed as an exclusively level-two template is a notion that Hayek and the upholders of the social-systems-as-natural-systems philosophy would find congenial: moral equivalence (or any other kind of morality) is not the product of moral intentions but of a natural process, and when the socio-political environment changes, as in the vicinity of Ramu Sugar Limited, amity gets “reconfigured”.

Do Big Men and ordinary Melanesians perceive the ultimate moral significance of what Big Men do? Do they knowingly tolerate or even encourage Big Men’s transgressions because they believe that otherwise all would be lost? It would be a stretch to suggest that the formula “bad actions, good consequences” is part of an articulated philosophical consensus which, in a formal way, empowers Big Men to do what President Bush claims to do with the Patriot Act. But I can imagine Big Men justifying their wicked acts, as Bush does, by pointing to [supposed] good results—*raison d’état*. I can also see the formula as folk wisdom like Tammany Hall and Plunkitt’s “honest graft,” something not entirely approved but tolerated as inevitable, perhaps even as necessary, and not all that bad, anyway (Riordan 1963). Indeed, it seems that perhaps Melanesians do knowingly tolerate a crook, so long as his crookedness is “socially productive.” Alternatively they may put up with the Big Man’s moral lapses, socially productive or not, because they cannot do anything

26 A disquieting extension of order being the transcendent morality is the *Führer-prinzip* or applied Leviathanism: rightness inheres in whatever the leader chooses to do.

about them; getting in his way would cost too much. If either or both of these things *are* the case, then the “split” between ethics and politics that is characteristic of Western societies is present, at least in a modest way, also in Melanesian political arenas. If they *are not* the case, if Melanesians are unaware of the “bad actions, good consequences” process, then the level-two template (the anthropologist’s) willy-nilly construes the socio-political order in Melanesia as a natural order, thereby making religion and morality epiphenomenal.

The Totality-Itch

Isaiah Berlin, writing in *The Hedgehog and the Fox* about Tolstoy, portrays him as a man constantly in search of (but never finding) a “single, serene vision, in which all problems are resolved, all doubts are stilled, peace and understanding finally achieved” (1957, 120). The title is taken from a cryptic verse by the satirist Archilochus: “The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.” Tolstoy was a would-be hedgehog; the scholar whom this book honors has the same inclinations. In all Burridge’s writings there are passages that convey the spirit of questing, of an effort to communicate the ineffable, something too sublime for words that can be known directly but cannot be expressed. Those of us who are foxes, condemned to be without a “unitary inner vision,” disengaged from the quest for oneness, and acknowledging an incapacity to hear the unutterable, can nevertheless, albeit in an inadequate way, comprehend this vision at least enough to ask what are its consequences. Crudely, what are the costs and benefits of the several forms in which the drive for oneness makes itself manifest?

We have an itch (which is in a way economic) to get the best return from our intellectual tools by making them do as much work as possible—the fewer we need, the better. *Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*. Taken to its extreme Occam’s razor suggests that there could be a single master-template that encompasses all others and so takes us infallibly to “the truth of things,” or perhaps (if we do not mind confusing ontology with methodology) such a template *is* “the truth of things.” In this concluding section I want to look briefly, first at the intellectual oneness that is achieved in level-two templates by the use of Occam’s razor, and, second, at the political use of devotional oneness (true-belief) in level-one templates.

Abstraction, which is the procedure that guides us toward oneness, is logically entailed in the template-metaphor: we create categories by selecting some features and ignoring others. That process of generalizing, which domesticates the untamed particulars, is the beginning of all thought and all knowledge. Without abstraction, there can be no meaning; without Occam’s razor, there is only the formless void. The problem, therefore, is not generalizing—there is no alternative—but knowing when movement in that direction ceases to advance knowledge and becomes a hindrance.

Even the most rampant relativist would accept the idea, which is built into level-two templates, that at a sufficiently abstract level all societies face the same problems. The solutions, of course, vary and that is why we are in business. This presupposition underlies what Evans-Pritchard said (in an inaugural lecture at Oxford in 1948): “What, in fact, we are trying to do today, and what I think we succeed in doing,

is to show what light is shed by intensive studies of primitive societies on general sociological problems...Our main purpose in studying primitive societies is to seek to understand the nature of human society.”

We abstract, we compare, and we generalize. Without comparison, nothing can be described or understood. The procedure, as everyone who tries it knows, is exhilarating. Catch the tone in these citations from Louis Dumont in his lecture on world renunciation in Indian religions: “...even at the level of precise analysis, and particularly in the religious sphere, striking similarities continue to emerge between people far apart and of different civilizations” (1960, 34). He is reaching across cultures for the oneness that resides in, I suppose, the human mind. Again, “There is perhaps one thing we have learnt since the foundation of anthropology and its conversion to sociology, I mean that it is by way of systems of relations, gradually elucidated, that apparent diversity can be simplified and ordered” (1960, 34).²⁷ There is a note almost of triumphalism in that sentence, a pride in having tamed diversity and reduced it to order. Burridge has similar thoughts, when he looks to attain what I earlier said was unattainable: “[T]here is a continuous search for an overall and coherent framework of ideas which might, for example, as well contain and deal with economic affairs as it might describe and analyze kinship systems, religion, or social organization” (1973, 41).

The higher the level of abstraction the more is diversity eliminated, the wider the applicability of the concept, and the wider the range of phenomena understood. At each step upwards we know about more things. That is the benefit; the cost is that we know less about each of them. What we gain in comprehensiveness, we lose in specificity. The higher and wider we go, the vaguer we become. We see the sameness; but if we want to know the differences—and only contrast makes explanation possible—we must step down toward the particulars. But why retreat? After all, there is an immense satisfaction—the “serene single vision”—to be derived from the sheer elegance of, for example, Dumont’s apogean summary (after Bouglé) of the Indian caste system: all “doubts are stilled” by the principles of separation, integration, and hierarchy, themselves further subsumed under the simple opposition of the pure and the impure. There it is, an enormous complexity ironed out! In a single concept (pure against impure) we have the essence of caste. Indeed we do; and one sits back with the same sense of “mission accomplished” that comes when the crossword’s final clue is solved. But what we do not have is any knowledge of praxis, of how the institution works, because we know nothing much about level-one templates (in the Dumont case, they mostly reside in Hindu scripture). That is exactly the point: the higher the level of abstraction the less we know about the know-how-world of level-one templates.

These strictures, it should be noted, apply not only to the ineffable domains of higher structuralism, but with equal force to the users of any template that abstracts to the point of unreality and then protects the simplification from the test of experience. *Homo economicus* is in that category when the concept is treated not as a

27 Note the pre-emption of reality in the use of “apparent.” What is only apparent is not real. I would reverse the position and attach the adjective to the simplification and the ordering.

methodological device but as an ontological truth about human nature. Neoclassical economists and other rational-choice theorists are astonishingly unwilling to test their theorizing (level two) against what goes on in the real world (level one). As one of their own, Ronald Coase (1991, 52), caustically remarked, "In effect what this comes down to is that when economists find that they are unable to analyze what is happening in the real world, they invent an imaginary world which they are capable of handling". "Neoclassical heaven," one might say.

I turn now to the political use of "oneness" and "participation" in level-one templates. What I have to say is not new, but it should be said again because it centrally influences the ideas about religion and politics that give shape to some of the essays in this book and to much of Burridge's own work.

"[A]ll religions are basically concerned with power. They are concerned with the discovery, identification, moral relevance and ordering of different kinds of power..." (Burridge 1969a, 5). How are they concerned? The foundational idea about religion and politics is contained in the phrase "the dialectic between rational objectivity and the participatory values" (Burridge 1973, 41) or in the opposition between "moral idealism" and the "contingencies of political action" (1973, 6). "Rational objectivity" guides behavior toward gaining advantage and emerges in "political action." "Moral idealism" (as always it is the morality of participatory values, amity, and equivalence) is the force that checks self-aggrandizing individuals and directs them toward social responsibility. The "contingencies of political action" push in the opposite direction. But in the lived-in world the political process is not a dialectic between opposing ideas, awaiting a synthesis: it is not even the agent torn between advantage and a clear conscience; it is a contest between individuals seeking power. Consequently it is usually pointless to look for a synthesis at level one; the outcome can only be a victory for one side or the other, a stalemate, or a deal (which is not a synthesis but a compromise). That seems to me to be the level-one template most generally in use in the political world, even when the rhetoric is about the moral dilemma.

The notion that participatory values put a brake on greed for power, which rational objectivity encourages, is flawed because, as in the case of *GD*, participatory values in practice are unworkable and must eventuate in rational objectivity. "Love" has to be treated like a commodity and rationed between competing recipients. Leaders too, insofar as they rely on the oxymoronic strategy of using equivalence values to get themselves a following, are in the same bind; in effect it pushes them toward the Tammany Hall category where followers are hirelings. Big Men, astutely investing their resources in a series of one-to-one deals, build up a following. But one-to-one deals bring managerial problems: it is hard not to over-reach and get into the position of the boss who cannot get the money together to meet the payroll. Even short of that point, it is clear (certainly from a level-two perspective and perhaps also at level one) that leaders with a following of this kind cannot benefit from the economics of scale. Quite the reverse; each link is hand-crafted and every new link means more work and diminishing marginal returns; there is, so to speak, no way to mass-produce a following. Credit granted by the follower to the leader, moreover, is short-term and precarious because it is constantly subjected to cost-benefit reckoning.

The solution is to mass-produce a following by affecting a change of heart—by turning hirelings into devotees or in some other way tapping into their emotions. Their devotion, their respect, or their fearfulness (these emotions are related—they all make domination possible) constitute the leader's moral capital. Big Men, as I read the literature, do not go far in the devotee-direction (other than those who caught the wave of cargo cults). They do, however, as the literature demonstrates, use sorcery to economize on material payouts by threatening physical harm. A reputation for sorcery is a mass-production instrument: the bond, if it can be called that, between leader and follower is not hand-crafted to suit each individual but is the same for all. Devotion to a cause or a person has the same political efficiency. In short, both the contradictions that inevitably go with conflicting participatory moralities and the managerial problems of a hand-crafted following are resolved if the leader can homogenize diversity by making one participatory community transcend and obliterate all the others. This is not the kindly "encompassing," the synthesizing that Dumont reads into that word (the general term folding in, but not eliminating, the essence of the folded-in particulars); rather it is an eradication—the particular is not subsumed in the general but deleted from it.²⁸

Morality, as I said, is a handy political weapon. The leader's procedure—I am thinking of what missionaries aim to do—is to recruit other communities or at least individuals from them, the goal being one transcendent community in which what the members share with one another is a common subordination to whatever ineffable entity is in command—that is to God or to "the truth of things."

What is this process like in practice? "Oneness" needs enemies. In the real world (this side of heaven) the one-community goal is pursued (logically enough) by the intolerance of diversity and by the persecution of heresies. Movements that recruit by spiritual conversion, by rebirth into a new faith, are ready instruments in a struggle for power. Put to that use, "oneness" is not a redemptive freedom from all obligations but the suppression of all of them except one, which is fulfilled by entry into an often highly-structured community of true-believers, who know that they alone know the truth and that they alone have the God-given right to exist. In that case the dilemma that participatory morality produces is resolved by a descent (from my humanistic point of view it is a descent) into the kind of zealotry that dehumanizes all non-believers and identifies them as the source of all evil. The procedures by which people search for "the truth of things" are, to put it gently, open to abuse.

If that is so, might we not think of "rational objectivity" and the "contingencies of political action" as a procedure and a process that, albeit unintentionally, usefully curb the excesses produced by "moral idealism"? When things go wrong, the rationalist, being objective and impersonal, examines systems and looks for causes; but the moralist asks "Who is to blame?" and sets out on a witch-hunt. *Homo economicus* doesn't love others; but neither does he hate them.

28 I have made the notion simpler than Dumont does. See his lengthy (and somewhat testy) discussion of "encompassing" as the characteristic feature of "hierarchy" (1971).

This page intentionally left blank

Epilogue

Kenelm Burridge

Anthropologists owe a debt of gratitude to John Barker for organizing this collection of most excellent essays, originating in a symposium in my honor. I am humbled. Still, since they are all about the moralities in varying circumstances, a few general remarks by an elder on the topic, slippery as it is, may be appropriate.

Up until the fifties of last century, say, anthropologists wrote of “primitive law.” But the use of “law” was hotly opposed by jurists who insisted that nonliterate peoples might indeed have customs and traditions but not law. Law was based on written texts. Also, in those days, many associated immorality mainly with deviant sexual practices, satanism and the like. Later, finessing the jurists and perceptions of immorality as chiefly having to do with beastly vice, anthropologists began to speak of “expectations.” At the same time, however, some were writing of the “moral community,” roughly defined by territory, language and the settlement of disputes by negotiations, which reiterated and made explicit what we now think of as the moralities, and restored at least a semblance of amity, rather than by warfare. War and feud were distinguished by saying that war was considered in principle to be between those who regarded each other as outside the moral community (nonpersons) while feuding occurred between persons (moral) within the moral community.

At this point it is as well to be reminded of the Israeli spokesman who, responding to accusations of immoral conduct during the first Israeli-Lebanese war, asserted that “Nobody has a right to criticize us on grounds of morality. We invented morality and are the arbiters of what is or is not moral.” Still, assuming the spokesman felt himself on safe ground and was referring to parts of Deuteronomy and the Decalogue, he seems to have forgotten that Hammurabi had codified much of the same material, and more, some five hundred years before Moses climbed the mountain.

If we say that morality could not have been “invented” by anyone, but is a series of distinctions between right and wrong conduct which, together making up and informing the rules of the social order, characterize the human community, we have to consider the maxim “might is right.” Among social animals, for example, the dominant male makes the rules, sets the limits—until challenged by a rival strong enough to replace him. As humans we have become familiar with forms of might being right: the dictator, the political party, the bureaucratic apparatus of nation states, the mafia boss and, in some communities, those capable manipulators who control the inflow of materials provided by the charitable donations of persons living in faraway places. There are of course other forms of might which sometimes run counter to those already mentioned: public opinion, secular or religious institutional life and of course status.

Socio-political leaders, managers and the influential even if they have to finesse the given moralities nevertheless generally if not always attempt to uphold them. Not to do so would alienate those on whom they rely for support. On the other hand, the charismatic leaders of religious cults, relaying the messages believed received from divinity in a vision or dream, especially in times of moral uncertainty, and aware that the extant social order is unsettled, attempt to change both the moralities and given perceptions of divinity.

Long ago Plato pointed out that the gods or divinities, far from being role models or moral exemplars, were totally self-willed, nonmoral, wholly unobliged, free: features which seems to inform divinities everywhere, sharply separating them from humans, who exist in conditions of obligedness. A partial exception, perhaps, is the Melanesian sorcerer and his analogues elsewhere. Regarded in principle as unobliged, and therefore nonmoral and dangerous and evil (as some divinities are), one may yet trace obligedness in the fact that he may be paid to do or undo his work and loses out if he fails to honor his wage. But paradoxically, his power to do harm keeps others in line and renews the moralities. Yet no matter how well one clings to what is thought “good,” how many prayers are offered, what sacrifices are made, divinity remains totally unobliged. Still, this does not stop people attempting by a variety of means to persuade divinity into obligation.

Although the moralities are secreted in the traditions and religious or secular institutions of a society, they are not necessarily secreted or even reflected in the law, which is only too often an ass. Everyone can bring examples to mind, whether in the conflict and sometimes futility of some laws, or in the very special treatment accorded to persons of status whose wrongdoing, found in “ordinary” citizens, would earn them a prison sentence.

Should one consider the privilege often given to status a perversion of law, might being right, or in some sense an act of mercy?

So we come to the encounter between Portia and Shylock, the quality of mercy versus the law to the letter. Yet it was not Portia herself, a judge executing the law, who was merciful. She persuaded Shylock to save his own and the defendant’s deaths by not insisting on his contract, the law to the letter. Thus mercy, whose roots lie in religion, for only the wholly unobliged can show true mercy, wins out, seems to trump the given moralities. But wait, Shylock buys his own life by not, in the end, demanding what amounted to the life of another. Although self-interested, and few acts are not, surely a moral act underscoring the nature of the moralities.

Following in the spirit of the immortal bard, the essays in this collection provide further splendid exemplars of the wide and tortuous scope of the moralities.

Bibliography

- Akin, D. and Robbins, J. (eds) (1999), *Money and Modernity: State and Local Currencies in Melanesia* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press).
- Alroe, M. (1988), "A Pygmalion Complex among Missionaries: The Catholic Case in the Kimberley," in T. Swain and D. Rose, (eds), *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions*, 30-44 (Adelaide: The Australian Association for the Study of Religions).
- Anonymous (1969), "Divine Word Missionaries in New Guinea," in, *The Word in the World, 1969, Divine Word Missionaries: New Guinea: A Report on the Missionary Apostolate* (Techny, Ill: Divine Word Publications).
- Anonymous (1985), "Health, Garden and Home," *Sugar Valley News* 10: 16-21.
- Anonymous (1987), "RSL...Manager Arrested and Tried at Ramu," *Sugar Valley News* 15: 32.
- Anonymous (2004), "Selected and Adapted from Flashpoints of Revival: Late Twentieth Century," *Pastornet*, <<http://www.pastornet.net.au/renewal/fire/ff-1970.htm>>, accessed 3 July 2004.
- Auden, W. H. (1940), *Another Time* (New York: Random House).
- Bailey, F. G. (2001), *Treasons, Stratagems, and Spoils* (Boulder: Westview).
- Bailey, F. G. (2003), *The Saving Lie* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).
- Bakker, H. (1999), *Sugar Cane Cultivation and Management* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum).
- Barclay, R. E. (1970-71), Official Correspondence for Patrol Report No. 10 (Nomad Sub-District Office, Western Province, Papua New Guinea: unpublished manuscript).
- Barker, J. (1985), "Missionaries and Mourning: Continuity and Change in the Death Ceremonies of a Melanesian People," in D. L. Whiteman, (ed.), *Anthropologists, Missionaries, and Cultural Change*, Studies in Third World Societies, No. 25, pp. 263-294 (Williamsburg: College of William and Mary).
- Barker, J. (1987), "Optimistic Pragmatists: Anglican Missionaries among the Maisin of Collingwood Bay, Oro Province," *Journal of Pacific History* 22: 66-81.
- Barker, J. (1989), "Western Medicine and the Continuity of Belief: The Maisin of Collingwood Bay, Oro Province," in S. Frankel and G. Lewis, (eds), *A Continuing Trial of Treatment: Medical Pluralism in Papua New Guinea*, pp. 69-93 (Dordrecht: Kluwer).
- Barker, J. (ed.) (1990a), *Christianity in Oceania: Ethnographic Perspectives* (Lanham: University Press of America).
- Barker, J. (1990b), "Encounters with Evil: The Historical Construction of Sorcery in Maisin Society, Papua New Guinea," *Oceania* 61: 139-155.

- Barker, J. (1993), "We are 'Ekelesia': Conversion in Uiaku, Papua New Guinea," in R. Hefner, (ed.), *Christian Conversion: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, pp. 199-230 (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Barker, J. (1996), "Village Inventions: Historical Variations upon a Regional Theme," *Oceania* 66: 211-229.
- Barker, J. (2003), "Christian Bodies: Dialectics of Sickness and Salvation among the Maisin of Papua New Guinea," *Journal of Religious History* 27: 272-92.
- Barker, J. (2004a), "Between Heaven and Earth: Missionaries, Environmentalists, and the Maisin," in V. Lockwood, (ed.), *Pacific Island Societies in a Global World*, pp. 439-59 (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall).
- Barker, J. (2004b), "Learning from New Guinea," *New York Review of Books* 51: 46.
- Barker, J. (2005a), "An Outpost in Papua: Anglican Missionaries and Melanesian Teachers among the Maisin, 1902-1934," in P. Brock (ed.), *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change*, pp. 79-106 (Leiden: Brill).
- Barker, J. (2005b), "Kawo and Sabu: Perceptions of Traditional Leadership among the Maisin of Papua New Guinea," in C. Gross, H. D. Lyons and D. A. Counts, (eds), *A Polymath Anthropologist: Essays in Honour of Ann Chowning*, pp. 131-137 (Auckland: Research in Anthropology and Linguistics, Monograph No. 6).
- Barker, J. (2007a), "Modalities of Modernity in Maisin Society," in S. Bamford, (ed.), *Embodying Modernity and Post-Modernity: Ritual, Praxis, and Social Change in Melanesia*, pp. 125-159 (Durham: Carolina Academic Press).
- Barker, J. (2007b), *Ancestral Lines: The Maisin of Papua New Guinea and the Fate of the Rainforest* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview).
- Bashkow, I. (2000), "Confusion, Native Skepticism, and Recurring Questions about the Year 2000: 'Soft' Beliefs and Preparations for the Millennium in the Arapesh Region, Papua New Guinea," *Ethnohistory* 47: 133-69.
- Bashkow, I. (2006), *The Meaning of Whitemen: Race and Modernity in the Orokaiva Cultural World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Bateson, G. (1958), *Naven* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
- Beeman, W. O. (2002), "Fighting the Good Fight: Fundamentalism and Religious Revival," in J. Macclancy (ed.), *Exotic No More*, pp. 129-144 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Beidelman, T. O. (1982), *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Historical Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
- Belshaw, C. S. (1957), *The Great Village; The Economic and Social Welfare of Hanuabada, An Urban Community in Papua* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).
- Bennett, J. and Shapiro, M. J. (2002), *The Politics of Moralizing* (New York; London: Routledge).
- Bennett, K. and Smith, L. (1983), "A Revival Movement among the Telefomin Baptist Churches," in W. Flannery (ed.), *Religious Movements in Melanesia: A Selection of Case Studies and Reports*, pp. 127-146 (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute for Pastoral and Socio-Economic Service).
- Berlin, I. (1957), *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (New York: Mentor).
- Berlin, I. (1980), *Against the Current* (New York: Viking).

- Besnier, N. (1996), "Authority and Egalitarianism," in R. Feinberg and K. Watson-Gegeo (eds), *Leadership and Change in the Western Pacific*, pp. 93-128 (London: Athlone Press).
- Bobbio, N. (2000), *In Praise of Meekness: Essays on Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Boddy, J. (1994), "Spirit Possession Revisited: Beyond Instrumentality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23: 407-434.
- Boutilier, J. A., Hughes, D. and Tiffany, S. W. (eds) (1978), *Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).
- Briggs (2006), *Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of American Nuns* (New York: Doubleday).
- Brison, K. J. (1992), *Just Talk: Gossip, Meetings, and Power in a Papua New Guinea Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Brock, P. (2005), "New Christians as Evangelists," in N. Etherington, (ed.), *Missions and Empire*, pp. 132-153 (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Brumbaugh, R. C. (1980), *A Secret Cult in the West Sepik Highlands*. PhD dissertation (Stonybrook: State University of New York).
- Burridge, K. (1956), "Social Implications of Some Tangu Myths," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 12: 415-431.
- Burridge, K. (1957a), "Friendship in Tangu," *Oceania* 27: 177-189.
- Burridge, K. (1957b), "Descent in Tangu," *Oceania* 28: 56-72.
- Burridge, K. (1957c), "The Gagai in Tangu," *Oceania* 28: 56-72.
- Burridge, K. (1958), "Marriage in Tangu," *Oceania* 29: 185-199.
- Burridge, K. (1959a), "Adoption in Tangu," *Oceania* 29: 185-199.
- Burridge, K. (1959b), "Siblings in Tangu," *Oceania* 30: 128-154.
- Burridge, K. (1960), *Mambu: A Melanesian Millennium* (London: Methuen).
- Burridge, K. (1966), "Tangu Political Relations," *Anthropological Forum*: 393-411.
- Burridge, K. (1969a), *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* (New York: Schocken).
- Burridge, K. (1969b), *Tangu Traditions: A Study of the Way of Life, Mythology, and Developing Experience of a New Guinea People* (Oxford: Clarendon).
- Burridge, K. (1973), *Encountering Aborigines, a Case Study: Anthropology and the Australian Aboriginal* (New York: Pergamon).
- Burridge, K. (1975), "The Melanesian Manager," in J. H. M. Beattie and R. G. Lienhardt (eds), *Studies in Social Anthropology*, pp. 86-104 (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Burridge, K. (1978), "Introduction: Missionary Occasions," in J. A. Boutilier, D. T. Hughes and S. W. Tiffany, (eds), *Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania*, pp. 1-30 (Lanham: University Press of America).
- Burridge, K. (1979), *Someone, No One: An Essay on Individuality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- Burridge, K. (1988), "Aborigines and Christianity: An Overview," in T. Swain and D. Rose (eds), *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions*, pp. 18-29 (Adelaide: The Australian Association for the Study of Religions).
- Burridge, K. (1991), *In the Way: A Study of Christian Missionary Endeavours* (Vancouver: UBC Press).

- Burt, B. (1994), *Tradition and Christianity: The Colonial Transformation of a Solomon Island Society* (London: Harwood).
- Carrier, J. G. (ed.) (1992), *History and Tradition in Melanesian Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Carrier, J. G. and Carrier, A. H. (1989), *Wage, Trade, and Exchange in Melanesia: A Manus Society in the Modern State* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Chowning, A. (1979), "Leadership in Melanesia," *Journal of Pacific History* 14: 66-84.
- Clark, J. (2000), *Steel to Stone: A Chronicle of Colonialism in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Clarke, W. (1973), "Temporary Madness as Theatre: Wild-man Behaviour in New Guinea," *Oceania* 43: 198-214.
- Coase, R. (1991), "The Nature of the Firm: Meaning," in O. E. Williamson and S. G. Winter (eds), *The Nature of the Firm: Origins, Evolution and Development*, pp. (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Coleman, S. (2000), *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. L. (eds) (1993), *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Cook, J. W. (1999), *Morality and Cultural Differences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Craig, B. and Hyndman, D. C. (eds) (1990), *Children of Afek: Tradition and Change among the Mountain-Ok of Central New Guinea*, Oceania Monograph, No. 40 (Sydney: University of Sydney).
- de Coppet, D. and Iteanu, A. (1995), "Introduction," in D. De Coppet and A. Iteanu, (eds), *Cosmos and Society in Oceania*, pp. 1-19 (Oxford: Berg).
- Deerr, N. (1950), *The History of Sugar* (London: Chapman and Hall).
- Demian, M. (2000), "Longing for Completion: Toward an Aesthetics of Work in Suau," *Oceania* 71: 94-109.
- Denton, T. (1963), "Let's Go to Jigalong," *Herald of Grace* 22: 30-33.
- Diamond, J. (2003), "The Religious Success Story," *New York Review of Books* 49.
- Dinnen, S. (2001), *Law and Order in a Weak State: Crime and Politics in Papua New Guinea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- Dirksen, A. (1932), *The New Testament Concept of Metanoia* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America).
- Dorney, S. (2000), *Papua New Guinea: People, Politics and History Since 1975* (Sydney: ABC Books).
- Douglas, B. (2001), "From Invisible to Christians to Gothic Theatre: The Romance of the Millennial in Melanesian Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 42: 625-650.
- Douglas, B. (ed.) (2003), *Women's Groups and Everyday Modernity in Melanesia*, *Oceania*, 74:1.
- Douglas, M. (ed.) (1970), *Witchcraft Confession and Accusations* (London: Tavistock).
- Douglas, M. (1978), *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).

- Draper, N. (1990), "Background to Stories from Telefomin Area," in N. Draper and S. Draper, (eds), *Daring to Believe: Personal Accounts of Life Changing Events in Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya*, pp. 134-138 (Hawthorn, Victoria: Australian Baptist Missionary Society).
- Dumont, L. (1960), "World Renunciation in Indian Religions," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 4: 33-62.
- Dumont, L. (1971), "On Putative Hierarchy and Some Allergies to it," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 5: 58-81.
- Dutton, T. E. and Voorhoeve, C. L. (1974), *Beginning Hiri Motu* (Canberra: Australian National University).
- Dwyer, P. and Minnegal, M. (1998), "Waiting for Company: Ethos and Environment among Kubo of Papua New Guinea," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4: 23-42.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. (1982), "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of the Clerics," *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie* 23: 294-314.
- Englund, H. and Leach, J. (2000), "Ethnography and the Meta-Narratives of Modernity," *Current Anthropology* 41: 225-48.
- Epstein, A. L. (1991), *In the Midst of Life: Affect and Ideation in the World of the Tolai* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Errington, F. and Gewertz, D. (1987), *Cultural Alternatives and a Feminist Anthropology: An Analysis of Culturally Constructed Gender Interests in Papua New Guinea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Errington, F. and Gewertz, D. (1995), *Articulating Change in the 'Last Unknown'* (Boulder: Westview Press).
- Errington, F. and Gewertz, D. (2004), *Yali's Question: Sugar, Culture, and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1937), *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon).
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1948), *Social Anthropology: an Inaugural Lecture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Eves, R. (2000), "Sorcery's the Curse: Modernity, Envy and the Flow of Sociality in a Melanesian Society," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 6: 453-68.
- Feinberg, R. (1978), "Rank and Authority on Anuta Island," in K. A. Watson-Gegeo and S. L. Seaton (eds), *Adaptation and Symbolism: Essays on Social Organization*, pp. 1-32 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- Fialka, J. (2003), *Sisters: Catholic Nuns and the Making of America* (New York: St. Martin's Press).
- Filer, C. (1985), "What Is This Thing Called 'Brideprice'?", *Mankind* 15: 163-183.
- Filer, C. (1998), "The Melanesian Way of Menacing the Mining Industry," in L. Zimmer-Tamakoshi (ed.), *Modern Papua New Guinea*, pp. 147-78 (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press).
- Filer, C. (ed.) (1999), *Dilemmas of Development: The Economic and Social Impact of the Porgera Gold Mine, 1989-1994* (Canberra: Asia Pacific Press).
- Finney, B. R. (1973), *Big-men and Business: Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth in the New Guinea Highlands* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press).

- Flanagan, J. G. (1981), "To Be the Same But Different: A Wovan Dilemma," in R. Gordon (ed.), *The Plight of Peripheral People in Papua New Guinea*, Cultural Survival, Occasional Paper No. 7, pp. 23-49 (Cambridge MA: Cultural Survival).
- Fortune, R. F. (1932), *Sorcerers of Dobu* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).
- Fortune, R. F. (1936), *Manus Religion: An Ethnological Study of the Manus Natives of the Admiralty Islands* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society).
- Foster, G. M. (1973), *Traditional Societies and Technological Change* (New York: Harper and Row).
- Foster, R. J. (1995), *Social Reproduction and History in Melanesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Foster, R. J. (1999), "Melanesian Anthropology in an Era of Globalization," *The Contemporary Pacific* 11: 140-159.
- Foster, R. J. (2002), *Materializing the Nation: Commodities, Consumption, and Media in Papua* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
- Frankel, S. (1976), "Mass Hysteria in the New Guinea Highlands: A Telefomin Outbreak and Its Relationship to Other New Guinea Hysterical Reactions," *Oceania* 47: 106-133.
- Frankel, S. (1986), *The Huli Response to Illness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Freud, S. (1975), *The Future of an Illusion* (New York: Norton).
- Garson, J. G. and Read, C. H. (eds) (1899), *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (London: The Anthropological Institute).
- Gewertz, D. B. and Errington, F. K. (1991), *Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts: Representing the Chambri on a World System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Gewertz, D. B. and Errington, F. K. (1999), *Emerging Class in Papua New Guinea: The Telling Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Gewertz, D. B. and Errington, F. K. (2002), "Margaret Mead and the Death of Alexis Gewertz Shepard," *Amherst Magazine* Spring: 10-15.
- Gibbs, P. (2000), "Religion and Politics in Papua New Guinea (1997-2000)," in M. Rynkiewicz and R. Seib, (eds), *Politics in Papua New Guinea: Continuities, Changes and Challenges*, Point, pp. 155-174 (Goroka: Melanesian Institute).
- Gilligan, C. (1982), *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).
- Glaskin, K. (2002), *Claiming Country: A Case Study of Historical Legacy and Transition in the Native Title Context*. PhD dissertation (Canberra: Australian National University).
- Gnecchi-Ruscone, E. (1991), *Power or Paradise? Korafe Christianity and Korafe Magic*. PhD dissertation (Canberra: Australian National University).
- Goddard, M. (2005), *The Unseen City: Anthropological Perspectives on Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea* (Canberra: Pandanus Books).
- Godelier, M. (1986), *The Making of Great Men: Male Domination and Power among the New Guinea Baruya* (New York: Cambridge University Press).
- Godelier, M. and Strathern, M. (eds) (1991), *Big Men and Great Men: Personifications of Power in Melanesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

- Goodenough, W. H. (1963), *Cooperation in Change* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation).
- Gordon, M. (2002), "Women of God," *The Atlantic Monthly* January 2002: 58-91.
- Gordon, R. and Meggitt, M. (1985), *Law and Order in the New Guinea Highlands* (Hanover: University Press of New England).
- Gostin, O. (1986), *Cashcropping, Catholicism and Change: Resettlement Among the Kuni of Papua*, Pacific Research Monograph 14 (Canberra: National Centre for Developmental Studies, Australian National University).
- Gregor, T. A. and Gross, D. R. (2004), "Guilt by Association: The Culture of Accusation and the American Anthropological Association's Investigation of Darkness in El Dorado," *American Anthropologist* 106: 687-98.
- Gregory, C. A. (1982), *Gifts and Commodities* (London: Academic Press).
- Hammar, L. (1998), "AIDS, STDs, and Sex Work in Papua New Guinea," in L. Zimmer-Tamakoshi, (ed.), *Modern Papua New Guinea*, pp. 257-296 (Kirkville: Thomas Jefferson University Press).
- Harris, J. (1990), *One Blood – 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity: A Story of Hope* (Sutherland: Albatross Books).
- Harrison, S. (1993), *The Mask of War: Violence, Ritual and the Self in Melanesia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
- Haslam, J. (2002), *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations Since Machiavelli* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Hayek, F. A. (1988), *The Fatal Conceit: the Errors of Socialism* (London: Routledge).
- Hermann, E. (1992), "Die Last der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungen an die Yali-Bewegung," in J. Wassmann (ed.), *Abschied von der Vergangenheit*, pp. 49-74 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag).
- Hermkens, A.-K. (2005), *Engendering Objects: Barkcloth and the Dynamics of Identity in Papua New Guinea* (Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit).
- Hirsch, E. (1990), "From Bones to Betelnuts: Processes of Ritual Transformation and the Development of 'National Culture' in Papua New Guinea," *Man* 25: 18-34.
- Hofmann, P. (2002), *The Vatican's Women: Female Influence at the Holy See* (New York: St. Martin's Press).
- Hofstadter, D. (1979), *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (New York: Basic Books).
- Howard, A. (1996), "Money, Sovereignty and Moral Authority on Rotuma," in K. Watson-Gegeo and R. Feinberg, (eds), *Leadership and Change in the Western Pacific*, pp. 205-238 (London: Athlone).
- Howell, S. (ed.) (1997), *The Ethnography of Morality* (London: Routledge).
- Huber, M. (1988), *The Bishop's Progress* (Washington, D.C. and London: Smithsonian Press).
- Huber, M. (1999), "The Dangers of Immortality: Dignity and Disorder in Gender Relations in a Northern New Guinea Diocese," in M. Huber and N. C. Lutkehaus (eds), *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, pp. 179-206 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).
- Huber, M. and Lutkehaus, N. C. (eds) (1999), *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).

- Hughes, D. T. (1978), "Mutual Biases of Anthropologists and Missionaries," in J. A. Boutilier, D. Hughes and S. W. Tiffany, (eds), *Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania*, pp. 65-82 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).
- Jaspers, K. (1953), *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Jebens, H. (ed.) (2004), *Cargo, Cult, and Culture Critique* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- Jebens, H. (2005), *Pathways to Heaven: Contesting Mainline and Fundamentalist Christianity in Papua New Guinea* (Oxford: Berghahn).
- Jenkins, P. (2002), "The Next Christianity," *Atlantic Monthly* October: 53-68.
- Jenness, D. and Ballantyne, A. (1920), *The Northern D'Entrecasteaux* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Jorgensen, D. (1980), "What's in a Name? The Meaning of Meaninglessness in Telefolmin," *Ethos* 8: 349-366.
- Jorgensen, D. (1981a), "Life on the Fringe: History and Society in Telefolmin," in R. Gordon (ed.), *The Plight of Peripheral People in Papua New Guinea*, Cultural Survival, Occasional Paper No 7, pp. 59-79 (Cambridge MA: Cultural Survival).
- Jorgensen, D. (1981b), Taro and Arrows: Order, Entropy and Religion among the Telefolmin. PhD dissertation (Vancouver: University of British Columbia).
- Jorgensen, D. (1991), "Big Men, Great Men and Women: Alternative Logics of Gender Difference," in M. Godelier and M. Strathern, (eds), *Big Men and Great Men: Personifications of Power in Melanesia*, pp. 256-271 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Jorgensen, D. (1993), "Money and Marriage in Telefolmin: From Sister Exchange to Daughter as Tradestore," in R. Marksbury (ed.), *The Business of Marriage: Transformations in Oceanic Matrimony*, pp. 57-82 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press).
- Jorgensen, D. (1994), "Locating the Divine in Melanesia: An Appreciation of the Work of Kenelm Burridge," *Anthropology and Humanism* 19: 130-137.
- Jorgensen, D. (1996), "Regional History and Ethnic Identity in the Hub of New Guinea: The Emergence of the Min," *Oceania* 66: 189-210.
- Jorgensen, D. (1998), "Whose Nature? Invading Bush Spirits, Traveling Ancestors and Mining in Telefolmin," *Social Analysis* 42: 100-116.
- Kahn, M. (1986), *Always Hungry, Never Greedy: Food and the Expression of Gender in a Melanesian Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Kane, J. (2001), *The Politics of Moral Capital* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Kaplan, M. (1995), *Neither Cargo nor Cult* (Durham: Duke University Press).
- Karlström, M. (2004), "Modernity and Its Aspirants," *Current Anthropology* 45: 595-619.
- Keesing, R. M. (1992), *Custom and Confrontation: The Kwaio Struggle for Cultural Autonomy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Keesing, R. M. and Tonkinson, R. (eds) (1982), Reinventing Traditional Culture: The Politics of Kastom in Island Melanesia, *Mankind*, 13 (4).
- Kelly, R. C. (1993), *Constructing Inequality: The Fabrication of a Hierarchy of Virtue among the Etoro* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).

- Kierkegaard, S. (1983), *Either/Or* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- Kierkegaard, S. (1987), *Fear and Trembling* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- Knaft, B. M. (1985a), *Good Company and Violence: Sorcery and Social Action in a Lowland New Guinea Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Knaft, B. M. (1985b), "Ritual Form and Permutation in New Guinea: Implications of Symbolic Process for Socio-political Evolution," *American Ethnologist* 21: 321-340.
- Knaft, B. M. (1986), "Text and Social Practice: Narrative 'Longing' and Bisexuality among the Begusi of New Guinea," *Ethos* 14: 252-281.
- Knaft, B. M. (1987a), "Managing Sex and Anger: Tobacco and Kava Use among the Begusi of Papua New Guinea," in L. Lindstrom (ed.), *Drugs in Western Pacific Societies*, pp. 73-98 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America).
- Knaft, B. M. (1987b), "Homosexuality in Melanesia," *Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology* 10: 155-191.
- Knaft, B. M. (1987c), "Reconsidering Violence in Simple Human Societies: Homicide among the Gebusi of New Guinea," *Current Anthropology* 28: 457-500.
- Knaft, B. M. (1989), "Imagery, Pronouncement, and the Aesthetics of Reception in Gebusi Spirit Mediumship," in G. H. Herdt and M. Stephen (eds), *The Religious Imagination in New Guinea*, pp. 67-98 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press).
- Knaft, B. M. (1997), "Gender Identity, Political Economy, and Modernity in Melanesia and Amazonia," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3: 233-259.
- Knaft, B. M. (2002a), *Exchanging the Past: A Rainforest World of Before and After* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).
- Knaft, B. M. (ed.) (2002b), *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press).
- Knaft, B. M. (2002c), "Trials of Oxymodern: Public Practice at Nomad Station," in B. M. Knaft (ed.), *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies*, pp. 105-143 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
- Knaft, B. M. (2005), *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World* (New York: McGraw-Hill).
- Kocher-Schmid, C. (ed.) (1999), *Expecting the Day of Wrath: Versions of the Millenium in Papua New Guinea* (Port Moresby: National Research Institute).
- Koselleck, R. (1988), *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press).
- Kuehling, S. (2005), *Dobu: Ethics of Exchange on a Massim Island, Papua New Guinea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- Kulick, D. (1992), *Language Shift and Cultural Reproduction: Socialization, Self, and Syncretism in a Papua New Guinean Village* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Laidlaw, J. (2002), "For an Anthropology of Ethics and Freedom," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 8: 311-332.

- Laitin, D. D. (1986), *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Lakoff, G. (2002), *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Lambek, M. (2000), "The Anthropology of Religion and the Quarrel between Poetry and Philosophy," *Current Anthropology* 41: 309-20.
- Langness, L. L. (1967), "Sexual Antagonism in the New Guinea Highlands: A Bena Bena Example," *Oceania* 37: 161-177.
- Langness, L. L. (1973), "Ethics," in I. Hogbin (ed.), *Anthropology in Papua New Guinea: Readings from the Encyclopaedia of Papua and New Guinea*, pp. 187-200 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press).
- Langness, L. L. (1974), "Ritual, Power, and Male Dominance in the New Guinea Highlands," *Ethos* 2: 182-212.
- Lattas, A. (1992), "Hysteria, Anthropological Discourse and the Concept of the Unconscious: Cargo Cults and the Scientisation of Race and Colonial Power," *Oceania* 63: 1-14.
- Lattas, A. (1998), *Cultures of Secrecy: Reinventing Race in Bush Kaliai Cargo Cults* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press).
- Lawrence, P. (1964), *Road Belong Cargo: A Study of the Cargo Movement in the Southern Madang District, New Guinea* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press).
- Lawrence, P. (1971), "The Garia of the Madang District," in R. M. Berndt and P. Lawrence (eds), *Politics in New Guinea*, pp. 74-93 (Perth: University of Western Australia Press).
- Lawrence, P. (1984), *The Garia: The Ethnography of a Traditional Cosmic System in Papua New Guinea* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
- Lawrence, P. and Meggitt, M. J. (eds) (1965), *Gods, Ghosts and Men in Melanesia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press).
- Leach, J. (2003), *Creative Land: Place and Procreation on the Rai Coast of Papua New Guinea* (New York: Berghahn Books).
- Lederman, R. (1981), "Sorcery and Social Change in Mendi," *Social Analysis* 8: 15-27.
- Lederman, R. (1998), "Globalization and the Future of Culture Areas: Melanesianist Anthropology in Transition," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27: 427-449.
- Lepowsky, M. (1993), *Fruit of the Motherland: Gender in an Egalitarian Society* (New York: Columbia University Press).
- LeRoy, J. (1985), *Fabricated World* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press).
- Lindenbaum, S. (1979), *Kuru Sorcery: Disease and Danger in the New Guinea Highlands* (Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing).
- Lindenbaum, S. (1981), "Images of the Sorcerer in Papua New Guinea," *Social Analysis* 8: 119-128.
- Lindholm, C. (1990), *Charisma* (London: Basil Blackwell).
- Lindstrom, L. (1990), *Knowledge and Power in a South Pacific Society* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press).
- Lindstrom, L. (1993), *Cargo Cult: Strange Stories of Desire from Melanesia and Beyond* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).

- Lohmann, R. I. (2000a), Cultural Reception in the Contact and Conversion History of the Asabano of Papua New Guinea. PhD dissertation (Madison: University of Wisconsin).
- Lohmann, R. I. (2000b), "The Role of Dreams in Religious Enculturation among the Asabano of Papua New Guinea," *Ethos* 28: 1-29.
- Lohmann, R. I. (2001), "Introduced Writing and Christianity: Differential Access to Knowledge among the Asabano," *Ethnology* 40: 93-111.
- Lohmann, R. I. (2003), "Turning the Belly: Insights on Religious Conversion from New Guinea Gut Feelings," in A. Buckser and S. D. Glazier (eds), *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, pp. 109-121 (Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield).
- Lutkehaus, N. (1983), "Introduction," in K. Boehm (ed.), *The Life of Some Island People of New Guinea*, pp. 1-61 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag).
- Lutkehaus, N. (1990), "From Charismatic Leader to Anti-Hero: The Life and Legacy of Irakau as Cultural Allegory," *Ethnology* 29: 243-259.
- Lutkehaus, N. (1995), *Zaria's Fire: Engendered Moments in Manam Ethnography* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press).
- Lutkehaus, N. (1996), "'Identity Crisis': Changing Images of Chieftainship in Manam Society," in K. Watson-Gegeo and R. Feinberg (eds), *Leadership and Change in the Western Pacific*, pp. 343-375 (London: Athlone).
- Lutkehaus, N. (1999), "Missionary Maternalism: Gendered Images of the Holy Spirit Sisters in Colonial New Guinea," in M. Huber and N. C. Lutkehaus (eds), *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, pp. 207-235 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).
- Lyambiane, B. (1978), "Telefomin Situation Report," *Telefomin Patrol Report* 27/4/78.
- Macintyre, M. (1989), "Better Homes and Gardens," in M. Jolly and M. Macintyre, (eds), *Family and Gender in the Pacific*, pp. 156-169 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Macintyre, M. (1998), "The Persistence of Inequality: Women in Papua New Guinea since Independence," in L. Zimmer-Tamakoshi, (ed.), *Modern Papua New Guinea*, pp. 211-230 (Kirkville: Thomas Jefferson University Press).
- Malinowski, B. (1926), *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).
- Malinowski, B. (1929), *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).
- Marwick, M. (1982), "Witchcraft as a Social Strain-Gauge," in M. Marwick (ed.), *Witchcraft and Sorcery: Selected Readings*, pp. 280-295 (New York: Harmondsworth: Penguin Books).
- McDonald, H. (2001), *Blood, Bones and Spirit: Aboriginal Christianity in an East Kimberley Town* (South Carlton: Melbourne University Press).
- Mead, M. (1966), *New Lives for Old. Cultural Transformations: Manus, 1928-1953* (New York: Dell).
- Meggitt, M. (1977), *Blood is Their Argument: Warfare among the Mae Enga Tribesmen of the New Guinea Highlands* (Palo Alto: Mayfield).

- Mikaelsson, L. (n.d.), *A Time for Sowing the Seeds of Heaven: Depictions of Childhood in Autobiographical Writings by Norwegian Missionaries*. (Unpublished manuscript).
- Mintz, S. (1985), *Sweetness and Power* (New York: Penguin).
- Munn, N. (1986), *The Fame of Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim (Papua New Guinea) Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Munroe, D. and Thornley, A. (eds) (1996), *The Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific* (Suva: Pacific Theological College and the Institute of Pacific Studies).
- Nagel, E. and Newman, J. R. (1958), *Gödel's Proof* (New York: New York University Press).
- Narakobi, B. (1980), *The Melanesian Way* (Boroko, Papua New Guinea; Suva, Fiji: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies and Institute of Pacific Studies).
- Neumann, K. (1992), *Not the Way It Really Was: Constructing the Tolai Past* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- North, D. C. (1990), *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- O'Hanlon, M. (1989), *Reading the Skin: Adornment, Display and Society among the Wahgi* (London: British Museum Publications).
- Otto, T. (1992), "The Ways of Kastom: Tradition as Category and Practice in a Manus Village," *Oceania* 62: 264-83.
- Peel, J. D. Y. (2000), *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).
- Rappaport, R. A. (1984), *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinea People* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Read, K. E. (1952), "Nama Cult of the Central Highlands, New Guinea," *Oceania* 23: 1-25.
- Read, K. E. (1955), "Morality and the Concept of the Person among the Gahuku-Gama," *Oceania* 25: 233-82.
- Read, K. E. (1959), "Leadership and Consensus in a New Guinea Society," *American Anthropologist* 61: 425-436.
- Rehbein, F. C. (1989), *Heil in Christentum und afrobrasilianischen Kulturen* (Bonn: Borengasser).
- Rehbein, F. C. (1990), *Missionary Thrust of the Servants of the Holy Spirit in Today's World* (Rome: Ariccia).
- Riordan, W. L. (1963), *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (New York: Dutton).
- Robbins, J. (1995), "Dispossessing the Spirits: Transformations of Desire and Ecology among the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea," *Ethnology* 34: 211-224.
- Robbins, J. (1998), *Becoming Sinners: Christian Transformations of Morality and Culture in a Papua New Guinea Society*. PhD (Charlottesville: University of Virginia).
- Robbins, J. (1999), "'This is Our Money': Modernism, Regionalism, and Dual Currencies in Urapmin," in D. Akin and J. Robbins, (eds), *Money and Modernity: State and Local Currencies in Contemporary Melanesia*, pp. 82-102 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press).

- Robbins, J. (2001a), "God is Nothing but Talk: Modernity, Language and Prayer in a Papua New Guinea Society," *American Anthropologist* 103: 901-912.
- Robbins, J. (2001b), "Secrecy and the Sense of an Ending: Narrative, Time, and Everyday Millenarianism in Papua New Guinea and in Christian Fundamentalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43: 525-51.
- Robbins, J. (2003a), "Dreaming and the Defeat of Charisma: Disconnecting Dreams from Leadership among the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea," in R. Lohmann (ed.), *Dream Travelers: Sleep Experiences and Culture in the Western Pacific*, pp. 19-41 (New York: Palgrave).
- Robbins, J. (2003b), "Properties of Nature, Properties of Culture: Possession, Recognition, and the Substance of Politics in a Papua New Guinea Society," *Soumen Antropologi* 23: 9-28.
- Robbins, J. (2004), *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Robbins, J. (2007), "Continuity Thinking and the Problem of Christian Culture: Belief, Time and the Anthropology of Christianity," *Current Anthropology* 48: 5-38.
- Robbins, J., Stewart, P. J. and Strathern, A. J. (eds) (2001), *Journal of Ritual Studies*.
- Robbins, L. (1935), *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science* (London: Macmillan).
- Robin, R. (2004), *Scandals and Scoundrels: Seven Cases that Shook the Academy* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- RSL (1993), *Employees Handbook: Grades 1 to 2* (Ramu Sugar Limited: Mimeographed Pamphlet).
- Russell, B. (1946), *A History of Western Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin).
- Ryle, J. (2005), "Roots of Land and Church: The Christian State Debate in Fiji," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 5: 58-78.
- Sahlins, M. D. (1981), *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structures in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).
- Sahlins, M. D. (1985), *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Sahlins, M. D. (1995), *How Natives Think: About Captain Cook, for Example* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Sahlins, M. D. (2000), "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia," in, *Culture in Practice, Selected Essays*, by M. Sahlins, pp. 71-93 (New York: Zone Books).
- Scaglione, R. (1979), "Formal and Informal Operations of a Village Court in Maprik," *Melanesian Law Journal* 7: 116-129.
- Scaglione, R. (1985), "Kiaps as Kings," in D. Gewertz and E. Schieffelin, (eds), *History and Ethno-History in New Guinea*, Oceania Monograph 28, pp. 77-99 (Sydney: Oceania Publications).
- Scheper-Hughes, N. (1992), *Death Without Weeping* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

- Schieffelin, E. L. (1976), *The Sorrow of the Lonely and the Burning of the Dancers* (New York: St. Martin's Press).
- Schwimmer, E. (1973), *Exchange in the Social Structure of the Orokaiva* (New York: St. Martin's).
- Silverman, E. (2001), *Masculinity, Motherhood, and Mockery: Psychoanalyzing Culture and the Iatmul Naven Rite in New Guinea* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).
- Smith, M. F. (1994), *Hard Times on Kairiru Island: Poverty, Development, and Morality in a Papua New Guinea Village* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- Smith, M. F. (2002), *Village on the Edge: Changing Times in Papua New Guinea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- Stephen, M. (ed.) (1987a), *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press).
- Stephen, M. (1987b), "Introduction," in M. Stephen, (ed.), *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia*, pp. 1-16 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press).
- Stephen, M. (1987c), "Contrasting Images of Power," in M. Stephen (ed.), *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia*, pp. 249-304 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press).
- Stephen, M. (1995), *A'aisa's Gifts: A Study of Magic and the Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Stewart, P. J. and Strathern, A. (eds) (1997), *Millennial Markers* (Townsville: Centre for Pacific Studies, James Cook University).
- Stewart, P. J. and Strathern, A. (2000), "Millennial Countdown in New Guinea," *Ethnohistory* 47:1.
- Stewart, P. J. and Strathern, A. (2001), "The Great Exchange: Moka with God," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 15: 91-104.
- Stipe, C. E. (1980), "Anthropologists versus Missionaries: The Influence of Presuppositions," *Current Anthropology* 21: 165-179.
- Stoll, D. (1982), *Fishers of Men of Founders of Empire? The Wycliffe Bible Translators in Latin America* (London: Zed Press).
- Strathern, A. J. (1971), *The Rope of Moka: Big-Men and Ceremonial Exchange in Mount Hagen, New Guinea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Strathern, M. (1988), *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Strathern, M. (1992), "The Decomposition of an Event," *Cultural Anthropology* 7: 244-254.
- Swain, T. and Rose, D. (eds) (1988), *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions* (Adelaide: The Australian Association for the Study of Religions).
- Tannos, J. (1996), "No. 2 PM Gets Chiefly Title at Home," *Post-Courier* May 10-12: 1.
- Tateyama, H. (2006), *Tubuan: History, Tradition, and Identity among the Tolai of Papua New Guinea*. PhD dissertation (Vancouver: University of British Columbia).
- Thomas, N. (1997), *In Oceania: Visions, Artifacts, Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press).

- Tietjen, A. M. and Walker, L. J. (1985), "Moral Reasoning and Leadership among Men in a Papua New Guinea Society," *Developmental Psychology* 21: 982-992.
- Tonkinson, M. (1985), "Two Women of Jigalong," in I. White, D. Barwick and B. Meehan, (eds), *Fighters and Singers: The Lives of Some Aboriginal Women*, pp. 161-174 (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin).
- Tonkinson, R. (1966), Social Structure and Acculturation of Aborigines in the Western Desert. MA thesis (Perth: The University of Western Australia).
- Tonkinson, R. (1974), *The Jigalong Mob: Aboriginal Victors of the Christian Crusade* (Menlo Park: Cummings).
- Tonkinson, R. (1981a), "Church and Kastom in Southeast Ambrym," in M. Allen (ed.), *Vanuatu*, pp. 237-267 (Sydney: Academic Press).
- Tonkinson, R. (1981b), "Sorcery and Social Change in Southeast Ambrym, Vanuatu," *Social Analysis* 8: 77-88.
- Tonkinson, R. (1988), "Reflections on a Failed Crusade," in T. Swain and D. Rose, (eds), *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions*, pp. 60-73 (Adelaide: The Australian Association for the Study of Religions).
- Tonkinson, R. (1991), *The Mardu Aborigines: Living the Dream in Australia's Desert* (Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston).
- Tonkinson, R. (2004a), "Encountering the Other: Millenarianism and the Permeability of Indigenous Domains in Melanesia and Australia," in H. Jebens (ed.), *Cargo, Cult and Culture Critique*, pp. 184-212 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- Tonkinson, R. (2004b), "Spiritual Prescription, Social Reality: Reflections on Religious Dynamism," *Anthropological Forum* 14: 183-201.
- Toulmin, S. (1992), *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Trigger, D. S. (1992), *Whitefella Comin': Aboriginal Responses to Colonialism in Northern Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Trompf, G. W. (1994), *Payback: The Logic of Retribution in Melanesian Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Tsing, A. L. (2005), *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- Turner, V. (1964), "Witchcraft and Sorcery: Taxonomy versus Dynamics," *Africa* 34: 314-325.
- Turner, V. (1974), *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
- Turner, V. (1982), *From Ritual to Theater: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications).
- Tuzin, D. F. (1976), *The Ilahita Arapesh: Dimensions of Unity* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Tuzin, D. F. (1980), *The Voice of the Tambaran: Truth and Illusion in Ilahita Arapesh Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Tuzin, D. F. (1997), *The Cassowary's Revenge: The Life and Death of Masculinity in a New Guinea Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Wagner, R. (1972), *Habu: The Innovation of Meaning in Daribi Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

- Wagner, R. (1977), "Speaking for Others: Power and Identity as Factors in Daribi Mediumistic Hysteria," *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 33: 124-152.
- Wagner, R. (1981), *The Invention of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Wapnok, D. (1990), "Diyos," in N. Draper and S. Draper (eds), *Daring to Believe: Personal Accounts of Life Changing Events in Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya*, pp. 154-160 (Hawthorn: Australian Baptist Missionary Society).
- Waugh, G. (2003), "Revival Fire Chapter 6: Twentieth Century," *Revival Fire*, <<http://www.revival-library.org/catalogues/history/waugh/06.htm>>, accessed 3 July 2004.
- Welbourn, F. B. (1961), *East African Rebels* (London: SCM Press).
- West, P. (2006), *Conservation is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea* (Durham: Duke University Press).
- Westermarck, G. (1986), "Court is an Arrow: Legal Pluralism in Papua New Guinea," *Ethnology* 25: 131-149.
- Westermarck, G. (1997), "Land Claims: Land, Law and Violence in the Papua New Guinea Eastern Highlands," *Oceania* 67: 218-233.
- Wetherell, D. (1977), *Reluctant Mission: The Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea, 1891-1942* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press).
- White, G. and Lindstrom, L. (eds) (1998), *Chiefs Today* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- White, G. M. (1985), "Premises and Purposes in a Solomon Islands Ethnopsychology," in G. M. White and J. Kirkpatrick (eds), *Person, Self, and Experience: Exploring Pacific Ethnopsychologies*, pp. 328-366 (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- White, G. M. (1991), *Identity Through History: Living Stories in a Solomon Islands Society* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press).
- Williams, F. E. (1923), *The Vailala Madness and the Destruction of Native Ceremonies in the Gulf Division*, Territory of Papua Anthropology Report No. 4 (Port Moresby: Government Printer).
- Williams, F. E. (1930), *Orokaiva Society* (London: Oxford University Press).
- Williams, F. E. (1941), "Group Sentiment and Primitive Justice," *American Anthropologist* 43: 523-539.
- Wiltgen, R. (1969), "Catholic Mission Plantations in Mainland New Guinea: Their Origin and Purpose," in K. S. Inglis, (ed.), *History of Melanesia*, Proceedings of the Second Waigani Seminar, Port Moresby, pp. 329-62 (Canberra: Australian National University Press).
- Woolmington, J. (1988), "'Writing on the Sand': The First Missions to Aborigines in Eastern Australia," in T. Swain and D. Rose (eds), *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions*, pp. 77-92 (Adelaide: The Australian Association for the Study of Religions).
- Young, M. W. (1971), *Fighting with Food: Leadership, Values, and Social Control in a Massim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Z'graggen, J. A. (1973), *Language Map of the Madang District, Papua New Guinea*, Pacific Linguistics No. 25 (Canberra: Australian National University).

- Zelenietz, M. (1981a), "Sorcery and Change: An Introduction," *Social Analysis* 8: 101-118.
- Zelenietz, M. (1981b), "One Step Too Far: Sorcery and Social Change in Kilenge, West New Britain," *Social Analysis* 8: 101-118.
- Zelenietz, M. and Lindenbaum, S. (1981), "Sorcery and Social Change in Melanesia," *Social Analysis* 8.
- Zorn, J. (1992), "'Graun Bilong Mipela': Local Land Courts and the Changing Customary Law of Papua New Guinea," *Pacific Studies* 15: 1-38.

This page intentionally left blank

Index

- Aboriginal Rescue Mission 176
Afek 132-33, 139
Africa 150, 155, 161
agency xvii, 2, 7, 16, 73, 93-94, 178, 199, 200, 203
 self-willed xv, xvii, 9, 10, 17, 31, 46, 50, 52, 53, 61, 67-68, 70, 79, 115, 118, 126, 202, 210
 see also individuality
Alexishafen 152, 155, 157, 158, 161
American Anthropological Association 4
amity *see* social amity
ancestors xiv, xv, 40, 42, 29, 55, 86, 88, 90, 132-33
anger xvi, 31-33, 40, 41, 48, 50, 51, 61, 138
Anglican mission 76, 77-78, 79, 84, 90, 91
anthropology
 and codes of ethics 175, 187
 hermeneutics of 20, 191-92, 196n11, 198
 and missionaries 19-20, 21, 167, 171-75, 179n8, 184, 185-89
 rational objectivity of 172-73, 183, 192, 206, 207
Asabano 18, 131-47
Auden, W. H. 192n4
Australian Aborigines 19-20, 171-89
autonomy *see* agency

Bailey, F. G. 2, 4, 20-21, 34n2
Baluan islanders 76, 81
Baptist missions 18, 120, 132, 133, 135, 140, 141, 187
Barker, J. xiii, xvii, 43, 49, 71
Bashkow, I. 10
Bateson, G. 162
Bedamini 62, 69, 71
Beidelman, T. O. 179n9
Berlin, I. 193, 194, 196, 204
Bible 9, 13, 138, 176, 177, 182

big men 8, 16, 25-35, 41, 45-46, 61, 67-68, 201-04
Bobbio, N. 26, 36
Briggs, K. A. 165n28
Buchan, J. xviii
Burridge, K. 2, 4, 20-21, 53-54, 59n1, 68, 73-74, 115, 150-51, 189, 192, 205
 on anthropologists 19, 21, 171-75, 180, 185
 on big men (managers) 16, 26-28, 33-34, 45-46, 48, 202
 on Christian contrariness 150, 154, 155, 159-60, 167
 on Christianity 153-54, 167, 177
 on colonial situations 9-10, 17, 75-77, 89
 on dilemmas 2, 9, 16, 36, 54
 on evil 39, 51
 on exemplars 2, 9, 16, 27-28, 34, 160, 168
 on individuality 2, 19, 20, 36, 37, 53, 115, 145, 153-54, 177, 200-01
 on integrity 9
 on Melanesians perceptions of Europeans 52-53, 67, 140
 on *metanoia* 20, 150, 154, 173n2, 179, 186
 on millenarian movements 2, 9-10, 115, 140-41, 160
 on missionaries 2, 19-20, 70-71, 145-46, 150-54, 163, 167, 171-76, 177-78, 180, 183, 185-86
 on the moral and the divine 8, 9, 10
 on the "new man" 140, 153, 160, 168, 179, 186
 neglect of women in work of 73, 150, 160, 167
 on reciprocal equivalence 7-8, 18, 45, 50, 67, 73, 93
 on religion 193, 206
 on rupture 115-16
 on social amity 7-8, 18, 50, 93, 109, 194

- on social change 9, 11, 130
- on social conflicts 7, 18, 93-95
- on sorcerers 16, 28, 39, 41, 47-48, 50, 51, 52
- Bush, G. W. 36, 203
- cargo cults 9-10, 17, 67, 79, 114-15, 130, 207
- cash cropping 60, 78, 81, 86, 91
- caste system 205
- Chambri 94, 95, 97
- choice 21, 160, 195
 - exercised by individuals xv, 12, 91, 157
 - moral 1, 5, 7, 13, 15, 28, 36n4, 51, 71, 178, 195, 197, 199
 - rational 193, 199, 206
 - in Urapmin culture 30-31
 - see also* moral dilemmas
- church services 63, 84, 86, 90, 91, 94, 119, 129, 132, 135, 142, 143, 181
- sermons during xiii, 83, 94, 136, 140, 176, 186n16, 187n17, 195
- Christianity
 - conversion to xviii, 19, 29, 88, 91, 131, 133, 154, 160, 167, 172, 177, 179, 207
 - and ecumenism 186, 188
 - history of 36-37, 175
 - indigenization of 136, 163, 179
 - fundamentalist 10, 12, 13, 171, 172-73, 176-78, 179, 181n10, 182, 183, 185n15, 188
 - metacultural nature of 20, 132, 153, 154, 167, 178-79
 - participatory values of 20, 172, 173-74, 183, 192, 193-94, 196-97, 206-07
 - Pentecostal/charismatic 29, 91, 130, 176, 183, 186, 195
 - and sin 5, 98, 121, 127, 140, 146, 181, 182, 187n17, 195
 - and syncretism 179, 186, 187n17
 - see also* Bible, church services, God, Jesus Christ, missionaries
- Cicero 196
- Clinton, W. J. 196
- Coase, R. 206
- colonialism xiv, 2, 5, 9, 17, 59n1, 72-73
 - Australian xviii, 66, 69-70, 94, 96-97, 133, 156
 - German 43, 48, 66, 67, 69, 77, 96n5, 150, 151, 152, 155-56, 166n29
 - moral dilemmas provoked by 9-10, 12, 168, 180
- colonial triangle xvii, 17, 43, 70, 75-77, 80, 89
- compensation payments xv, 11, 61, 98, 102, 104, 105-08, 141-42, 188
 - as extortion 13, 18, 95, 100, 102
- confession 121, 129, 140
- cooperatives 9-10, 78-79, 80, 85-89
- cosmology xiii-xviii, 7, 60, 192
- dancing xvi, 64, 65, 83, 103, 151
- Dalton, D. xviii, 6, 8, 9, 15-16, 115n3, 197
- Daribi 128n19
- death xvii, 40, 41, 61, 64, 84, 105, 122
 - compensation for 104, 106-07
 - exchanges 33, 61, 64, 82
- de Coppet, D. 26
- Diyos 18-19, 120, 131-47
- Dobu 5
- Douglas, M. 45, 51
- Doull, D. 133
- Draper, N. and S. 120n12, 136
- Dreaming (the) 186
- dreams 8, 16, 47, 50, 125, 137-38, 168, 210
- Drury, J. 141
- Dumont, L. 36, 200-01, 205, 207
- Duranmin *see* Asabano
- Durkheim, E. 1, 6-7, 67
- economy
 - capitalist xiv, 5, 9, 11-12, 52, 96
 - cash 11, 12-13, 17, 60, 71
 - and emerging class distinctions 18, 36n4, 95, 99, 100, 108n17, 150, 160, 168
 - and *homo economicus* 52, 53, 203, 205-06, 207
 - neoclassical approaches to 194, 198-99, 200, 206
 - see also* money, modernity
- Eisenstadt, S. N. 36
- elders 48, 75, 79, 86-87, 88, 101, 133
- Errington, F. xviii, 12n5, 13, 17-18, 47n5, 82, 160n19
- ethics *see* morality
- ethnocide 179
- Etoro 7
- exchanges
 - at death 33, 61, 64, 82

- marriage 29, 35n3, 42, 46, 61, 73, 99,
 101, 122n16, 124, 163
 of shell valuables xvi, 29, 35, 104,
 108n17, 122n16, 162
 sister 17, 42, 60, 61, 64
see also reciprocity
 Europeans
 and the denial of reciprocal relationships
 9, 17, 52-53, 67
 Melanesian perceptions of 52-53, 67, 140
 moral dilemmas exemplified by 10, 76,
 94, 117, 168
 as sorcerers 52
 Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 44, 204
 evil 2, 8, 39, 49, 183, 207, 210
 sorcerer as symbol of 2, 8, 16, 39, 41, 44,
 51, 55
 exchanges
 with God 146
 of pigs 29, 34-35, 100-02, 123
see also reciprocity
 exemplars *see* moral exemplars

 feminism 164-66
 Fialka, J. 149
 Fiji 76
 Fortes, M. 4
 Fortune, R. F. 5, 7
 Frankel, S. 116-17

 Gahuku-Gama 5-6, 25
 Gandhi, M. 193, 199n20
 Ganter, C. and J. 132, 141-43
 Gawa islanders 3, 76
 Gebusi 7-8, 17, 43, 49, 59-64, 68-73
 gender 4, 7, 66, 72-73, 153n7, 157n15,
 159n16, 160, 167
 Gewertz, D. xviii, 12n5, 13, 17-18, 47n5,
 82, 160n19
 ghosts xiv, 5, 6, 7, 8, 117, 119, 125-26,
 127n17
 Gilligan, C. 166
 Glaskin, K. 175n4
 globalization 10, 11, 13-14, 71, 113, 151,
 152, 163-64
 God 36, 98, 128, 164-65, 178, 186, 207
 Australian Aboriginal conception of 186,
 187n17
 authority of 63, 70, 71, 84, 127, 142-43,
 149, 176
 exchange relation with 84, 86, 121, 125,
 146-47
 gender characteristics of 164-66
 given morality 196-97, 199, 201n24, 207
 healing and 18, 126, 183
 interventions of 87, 133, 144
 love of 89, 94
 and missionary authority xvii, 19, 84,
 116, 132, 140, 142, 145, 146-47
 obedience to 84, 136, 145-46, 149, 158
 revelations from 18-19, 120-21, 134-40,
 144
 see also Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ
 Gödel, K. 50

 Haiveta, C. 109n17
 Hammurabi 209
 Hayek, F. A. 200, 203
 health and healing 44-48, 101, 102, 116,
 155, 179, 189
 as a gift from God 18, 126, 183
 as a measure of morality xv-xvi, 6, 86
 see also *rebaibal* movement, spirit
 women
 Heaven 10, 94, 122, 158n16, 180, 193, 195,
 202
 Hefner, R. 83
 hierarchy 7, 63, 64, 68, 70, 71, 82, 83, 161,
 164n26, 205, 207n28
 highlanders (Papua New Guinea) xiii-vii, 9,
 15, 96n7, 98, 99-101, 103, 107
 Hofmann, P. 165n28
 Holy Spirit
 possession by the 18, 116, 120-22, 127-29,
 139, 181
 homicide 17, 31, 60, 62, 64, 118n6, 135,
 187n17
 Huber, M. 156n14, 159, 167
 Hughes, D. T. 188n19
 Huli 6, 72
 human nature 181, 198, 206
 hysteria xvii, 18, 114-18, 120, 121-22, 124-30

 Iatmul 19, 155, 160-63
 Ilahita Arapesh 65
 India 150, 153, 167
 individuals

- in advantage template 200
 vs collectivity xvii, 6, 9-11, 20, 194, 199
 in indigenous society xiv-xvii, 9, 31, 52
 as moral innovators 200-01
 as relational-individuals xiv-xv
 individuality
 generalized 36, 37, 145, 146, 177, 178
 and modernity 2, 12, 16, 53, 71, 91, 128, 167
 and moral self-critique 115-16, 160
 and personal transformation 154, 159
 Indonesia 150, 167
 inequality 7, 61, 67, 71, 173
 Inkles, A. 53
 Irakau 151n2
 Iteanu, A. 36

 Janssen, A. (Fr.) 165
 Jaspers, K. 26
 Jenness, D. 4
 Jesus Christ 37, 55, 119, 136, 138-39, 146,
 158n16, 164, 175, 177n6, 178, 182
 Jigalong 174n3, 175-78, 180-84, 186-89
 John the Baptist 140
 Johnson, L. B. 197n15, 201
 Jorgensen, D. 9, 12, 18, 19, 29, 99, 131, 135-36

 Keck, V. xvi
 Kelly, R. C. 7
 Kierkegaard, S. 16, 40, 51, 53-55
 kinship 3-4, 11, 30, 64-66, 102, 107, 205
 Knauft, B. M. xviii, 7-8, 11, 12, 16, 17, 43,
 45, 82, 84n8, 91
 Knauft, E. C. 59
 Kohlberg, L. 81n6

 labor migration 12-13, 59, 60, 72, 77, 90,
 95, 109, 123
 Laidlaw, J. 3, 4
 Lakoff, G. 165n27
 land 10, 11, 13, 65-66, 79, 83, 84, 108n17,
 187-88
 Langness, L. L. 3, 5
 law 2, 79-80, 81, 84, 88-90. 98. 100. 106,
 193, 201, 209
 Australian Aboriginal 176n4, 184, 186,
 187
 Urapmin 31-32, 33
 Lawrence, P. 6, 115, 183n12

 leadership xiv-xvi, 27, 29, 44-45, 61, 80,
 83n7, 87-88, 89
 see also big men, politics, politicians
 Lederman, R. 113
 Lindholm, C. 134
 Lohmann, R. I. xviii, 2n2, 15, 18-19
 love 37, 46, 49, 54, 81, 94, 154, 158, 172,
 178, 194, 195, 206
 Lutheran missionaries 65, 155
 Lutkehaus, N. C. xviii, 2n2, 14, 19, 132

 Mabo decision 188
 Machiavelli, N. 196-97
 Maher, R. xviii
 Madang Province xvi, 7, 39, 75, 96n7, 98,
 99 102, 105, 155, 157
 Maisin 12, 17, 43, 49, 75-91
 Malinowski, B. 4, 44
 managers *see* big men
 Manam Island 75n1, 150-52, 155, 156n13
 Manus 5, 6, 7, 66, 76, 96n7
 Mardu *see* Jigalong
 Mari 12n5, 98n12, 99-100
 marriage 29, 30, 33, 45-46, 60, 61, 64, 65,
 68, 82, 100-01, 117, 156, 162-63
 bridewealth payments for 29, 35n3, 42,
 46, 61, 73, 99, 101, 122n16, 124, 163
 mixed 98
 sister exchange 17, 42, 60, 61, 64
 symbolic, of Sister Gabriella 160-63
 McArthur, G. 133
 McDonald, H. 175n4, 181n10, 186n16,
 188n18
 Mekeo 8
metanoia 150, 154-55, 159n18, 179,
 200n22, 201
 mutual 20, 173n2, 186
 millenarian movements *see* cargo cults
 Milne Bay Province 76, 96n7
 Missionary Aviation Fellowship 137, 139
 missionaries
 and anthropologists 19-20, 21, 167,
 171-75, 179n8, 184, 185-89
 authority of 145-46, 182-83
 as colonial agents 53, 69, 76-77, 78-80,
 185
 indigenous 18-19, 75, 78, 131-32,
 149-50, 152, 157, 163, 168
 indigenous resistance towards 174-76

- and individuality 19-20, 145, 154, 177
- moral dynamics of 131, 132, 145-47, 154, 179, 201, 207
- as moral exemplars 2, 9, 131, 140, 145
- moral teachings of xiii, 51, 182
- motivation to become 150, 156-60, 167-68
- perceptions of indigenous cultures 90, 120n12, 129-30, 146, 172-75, 176, 180-88
- and social change 1, 17, 19, 50, 86, 145, 153-54, 177-80, 184
- and the Christian systemic 154
- transnational character of 163-64, 172
- varieties of 172, 183, 186
- see also* Christianity, *metanoia*, specific denominations
- modernity xviii, 8-9, 10-14, 15, 16, 40, 85, 126, 128, 159
- and customs (*kastom*) 11, 12n5, 13, 14, 73, 75-76, 81, 98, 161, 166
- and individualism xiv
- local and vernacular 11, 16, 63, 70, 115, 129
- and morality 1, 2, 10, 52-54, 151
- money 2, 142, 206
- and demands to share with kin and *wantoks* 12-13, 82, 123-26, 128
- dependence upon 110, 12, 18, 77, 91, 124
- in exchanges 99, 101-02, 123, 125, 162
- and reciprocal values 2, 16, 17, 52, 94-95, 102, 108, 122n16
- in Red Box cult 119n10
- shell 29, 35n3
- and social status 100, 102, 109
- Moore, T. 8n3
- moral dilemmas 1-2, 8, 9-12, 20-21, 33, 29, 46-47, 81n6, 194-95, 197, 202
- in anthropology 4, 20-21, 173
- and choice 1, 5, 7, 13, 15, 28, 36n4, 51, 71, 178, 195, 197, 199
- exemplified by big men 8, 27-28, 33, 46, 50
- exemplified by bitter men 15
- exemplified by Europeans 10, 76, 94, 117, 168
- exemplified by rubbish men 8, 9, 15, 28, 32, 42, 66
- provoked by colonialism 9-10, 12, 168, 180
- moral exemplars xvii, 1, 2, 9, 14-15, 19, 27-28, 30-31, 34-35, 145, 177, 202-03, 210
- moral relativism 4, 50-51
- morality viii-xviii, 1-15
- vs advantage template 192, 193, 195n9, 198-202
- vs amorality 5, 9, 47, 51, 67, 68, 93, 198-99, 200-03
- anthropology of xiii, 1-5
- and the body xv, 4, 6, 40, 86, 119, 182
- and cosmology viii-xviii, 7, 60, 192
- definition of 4
- emotivist vs intuitionist 16, 40, 49-51, 54
- and landscapes 4, 6
- in Melanesian ethnography 5-15
- orthodox in Maisin society 81-83, 90
- politics and 2, 13-14, 16, 20-21, 25-28, 35-37, 50, 86, 165n27, 192, 196-97, 200-04, 206
- public vs private 196
- and reciprocal values 2, 12, 31-32
- see also* agency, Burridge, choice, individuality, missionaries, modernity, politics, reciprocity
- Morgan, L. H. 1
- Mother Theresa 149, 153
- Mount Hagen xv-vii, 119n10, 157
- murder *see* homicide
- mythology xv, xvii, 8, 9, 64-65, 67, 132
- Munn, N. 3
- Murphy, R. 153n7, 151
- Narakobi, B. 108n16
- naven* ceremony 162
- Nietzsche, F. 51
- New Britain 76, 96n7, 155n12
- New Ireland 96n7
- North, D. C. 200, 202
- Ok Tedi mine 18, 99, 116, 118n8, 122-24, 126, 127, 129, 144
- Okuk, I. 15
- Ongka-Kaepa xvi-vii
- Orokaiva 6
- Otto, T. 76, 81

- Papua New Guinea
 decolonization of 156
 economic classes in 18, 36n4, 95, 99,
 100, 108n17, 150, 160, 168
 elections in xvii, 13, 14, 15n6, 91
 elites in 11, 13-14, 109
 expatriates in 96, 97n7, 98, 102-05
 Independence of 17, 91, 96, 116, 118n8,
 122, 156, 167
 patrol officers 9, 60, 69, 77, 121, 133, 156
 Philippines 150
 plantations 67, 69, 71, 73, 78, 96, 155
 Plato 210
 Poland 159n18, 167
 police 78, 84, 85, 87, 90, 105-06, 107
 politics 13-14, 16, 18, 36-37, 45, 72,
 76-77, 81, 89, 94, 165n27, 187, 192-93,
 199-200, 204-06
 and the anthropological study of morality
 2-3, 4, 20-21, 25-26, 37, 174, 188, 192
 of consensus 86, 89-90
 of national elites 11, 13-14, 109
 and morality 16, 20-21, 25-29, 35-36, 50,
 53, 173, 174, 178, 188, 189, 192, 196,
 200-01, 203-04, 206-07
 and *realpolitik* 16, 27, 197
see also big men
 politicians xvii, 14-15, 18, 26, 50, 108-09,
 196, 200
 big men as 5, 27, 200
 corruption of xvii, 17
 prayer 122n15, 125, 126, 128n18, 129,
 133-39, 151, 158, 177, 181, 182, 196, 210
 Prosperity Gospel 14
- Rabbit Proof Fence 176
 racism 173, 183, 189
 Ramu Sugar Ltd 12n5, 13, 18, 47, 93-109, 203
 Rawa 15-16, 39-55
 Read, K. E. 5-6, 25, 28
rebaibal movement 18-19, 133n1, 116,
 120-22, 127-30, 131, 133
 and demise of men's cult in Telefolmin
 18, 116, 119n11, 121, 122, 128
see also spirit women
 reciprocity 2, 31, 60, 65-66, 108
 balanced 8, 17, 18, 82, 104
 and big men 25-26, 27-28, 33
 in compensation payments 13
 denial of 9, 28, 33, 42, 52, 61, 67, 82
 and equivalence 6, 7-8, 9, 31, 33, 41,
 45-46, 49, 53, 59, 60, 68, 71, 108
 and Europeans 9, 17, 52-53, 67
 as moral obligation 2, 12, 31-32
 social amity and 7-8, 18, 31
 social dynamics of 8, 10, 12, 31-33, 61, 67
see also social amity
 Rehbein, F. C. 166n29-30
 Reich, A. 167
 religion 177, 179-80, 193, 200n23, 201, 205
 in indigenous Melanesia xiii-xviii, 6-7,
 6-61
 and male initiation cults 18, 29, 60, 63,
 67, 68, 116, 117, 119n11, 120-21, 122,
 127, 128, 132-33
 and power 206
 as a redemptive process 145
 and the study of morality xiii-xviii, 3, 4,
 20, 192, 204, 210
 syncretic 179, 186, 187n17
see also Christianity, spirits, sorcerers
 Robbins, J. 5, 8, 10, 15, 16, 46, 47, 131,
 135, 136, 196, 200, 202
 Roman Catholic Church 20, 62, 71, 249,
 150-52, 155, 159, 164-67, 175-76,
 178n7, 193-94
 Missionaries of Charity 149, 150n1
 nuns 149-50, 154-60, 163-68
 Society of Holy Spirit Sisters 151-52,
 155-68
 Society of the Divine Word 151-53,
 155-59, 161, 163, 165, 166n29, 168
 Rome 98, 152, 155, 163, 164
 rubbish men 8, 9, 15, 28, 32, 42, 66
 Russell, B. 196
- Sahlins, M. D. 25, 28, 95, 108
 Sartre, J-P. 51
 Satan 12, 117, 118, 139, 209
 Schieffelin, E. 3
 Scott, M. xvi
 security circle 6
 Seventh-Day Adventist Church 14, 62, 71,
 91, 151, 187
 shame 5, 9, 12, 42-43, 76
 shell valuables xvi, 29, 35, 104, 108n17,
 122n16, 162

- sin 5, 98, 121, 127, 140, 146, 181, 182, 187n17, 195
 Smith, L. 135-36, 138, 140
 social amity 7-8, 18, 49-50, 60, 72, 82, 83-84, 90, 93-95, 98-99, 108-09, 194, 197, 201-03
 social change
 improvisatory nature of 9, 11
 missionaries as source of 1, 17, 19, 50, 86, 145, 153-54, 177-80, 184
 as rupture 12, 113, 115, 126, 129-30
 Solomon Islands xvi, 96, 134
 Somare, M. 15, 109n17
 sorcerers 5, 6, 201, 207
 big men and 44-48, 201
 Europeans viewed as 52
 among Gebusi 17, 60, 61
 among Maisin 81, 82, 86, 91
 as moral exemplars 8, 16, 41-42, 45-46, 47-48
 among Rawa 16, 40-52
 as symbol of evil 2, 8, 16, 39, 41, 44, 51, 55
 see also witchcraft
 spirit women (*spirit meri*) 18, 61, 116, 120-22, 125-29
 spirits xiv, xv, xvii, 5, 61, 63, 119, 136, 138
 ancestor xiv, 40, 55, 132-33
 associated with Telefolmin cult houses 117, 119n9, 121, 122, 127, 128
 and Gebusi mediums 60-61, 63
 see also ghosts
 sports 30, 33-34, 63, 68, 69, 79, 123
 Stephen, M. 8, 41n2-3, 43, 44, 45
 Stoll, D. 153n7
 Strathern, A. 119n10
 Strathern, M. 28
 subjectivity 8, 9, 63, 72, 128
 suicide 124, 125
 Summer Institute of Linguistics 153n7

 Tangu 7-8, 17, 41-42, 50, 52, 64-73, 93-94, 152
 teachers 63, 78, 135, 137, 157
 Telefolmin 18, 113-30, 132-33, 142, 144
 Thomas, N. 76n2
 Tietjen, A. M. 75, 81n6
 Tolai 12n5, 76

 Tolstoy, L. 51, 204
 Tonkinson, M. 187n17
 Tonkinson, R. xviii, 2, 4, 19-21, 146
 Toussant, S. 174n3
 Trigger, D. S. 179n9, 181n10
 Trompf, G. W. 3
 Tufi 77, 78, 79, 84, 85
 Turner, V. 45, 51, 195
 Tuzin, D. 65
 Tylor, E. B. 4

 United Aborigines Mission 176n4
 Urapmin 16, 18, 28-35, 47

 van Baar, C. 153
 Vanuatu 181
 Vatican II 151, 164n26, 165
 villages
 associations in 79-80
 courts in 29, 49, 97-99, 100-08, 109, 118
 meetings in 17, 41, 42, 43, 80, 83-89, 90

 Wagner, R. 28, 128n19
 Wanigela 77, 78
 wantok networks 11, 12-14, 97n10
 warfare 8, 13, 42, 43, 48, 64, 65, 67-68, 77, 83, 209
 Weber, M. 193, 195
 white men *see* Europeans
 Williams, F. E. 4, 6, 113-14, 121
 witchcraft 7, 16, 41n2-3, 45, 51
 women 14, 73, 117-18, 123, 156, 165, 166
 choosing to become nuns 149-50, 156-60, 168
 marriage and 30, 33, 61, 135, 162
 involvement in mass hysteria in Telefolmin 116-18
 missionaries 167-68
 sorcery and 41, 66
 as *spirit meri* 18, 61, 116, 120-22, 125-29
 violence against 13, 135
 World War II 49, 66, 68, 73, 78, 80, 133, 151, 155, 156
 Americans during 66, 78, 156
 Japanese during 66, 68, 156

 Z'raggen, J. A. 152